THE POLITICS OF ANTICLERICALISM: WALDECK-ROUSSEAU, COMBES, AND THE CHURCH, 1899-1905

by

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Date: April 28, 1967

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of History
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ABSTRACT

(History)

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ABSTRACT

At the opening of the twentieth century, the issue of anticlericalism, which had smoldered in French politics since the Revolution, suddenly became of paramount importance. It completely dominated the political scene in France from 1899 until 1905, overshadowing every other social and political question and preoccupying the minds of leading republican figures. The anticlerical campaign inaugurated in 1899 was destined to produce momentous consequences. In the course of six years a veritable revolution was wrought in the French religious establishment. As is often the case with sweeping social and political movements, the originators of the anticlerical campaign had little foresight of the consequences when they unleashed the forces of anticlericalism.

The period under study covers the ministries of two republican politicians, René Waldeck-Rousseau, and Emile Combes. It was Waldeck who initiated proceedings against certain "troublesome" Catholic religious orders in 1899; the anticlerical movement that he began resulted in the passage of the Associations Law of 1901. Although Waldeck-Rousseau was numbered among the ranks of anticlerical republicans, he enjoyed the reputation of being a moderate on the thorny issue of church-state relations. The anticlerical legislation he proposed to Parliament in 1899 indicated that he wished to secure the enactment of a measure that would effectively supervise the monastic orders without permitting the state to tyrannize over them. Waldeck

had no affection for politically minded religious orders, and he shared to a certain extent the radical anticlerical prejudice against monastic education. But he regarded the nursing, charitable, and contemplative congregations as beneficial to society, and these orders he wished to supervise but not suppress.

Waldeck-Rousseau was unable to persuade the French parliament to his views. The debates on the Associations bill were conducted in an emotional atmosphere, scarcely conducive to dispassionate and objective discussion. The dying echoes of the Dreyfus Affair, in which certain elements of the Catholic clergy had played an unfortunately active role, served to rouse political passions to fever pitch. The anticlerical movement that had gained force in France during the nineteenth century, and which had been held in check since the founding of the Third Republic, was not to be denied. As a result, Waldeck's proposed Associations bill was substantially modified by the parliamentary commission reporting on it; it emerged from the national legislature in 1901 in a form embodying principles and practices of which the Premier disapproved. Waldeck enforced the new law with both caution and moderation. Then, faced with the prospects of having to direct and harness a decidedly anticlerical majority returned to the Chamber of Deputies in the election of 1902, Waldeck decided to abandon office.

Emile Combes, the new Premier, was a more determined foe of the Catholic Church and its monastic orders than was Waldeck-Rousseau, and Combes drastically expanded the anticlerical program. Totally unsympathetic to the principles and philosophy of monastic life, Combes undertook to execute the Associations Law in a manner that would result in the suppression of whole categories of unauthorized religious orders. Moreover, the new Premier and his supporters were determined advocates of a state monopoly over education and they enacted a law which forbade both "legal" and "illegal" orders to instruct French youth. The Premier quickly became embroiled in a bitter conflict with the hierarchy in France. In time, Combes' anticlerical policies became also a diplomatic issue of the first magnitude and contributed significantly to the rupture of relations with the Holy See in 1904.

During the ministries of Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes the groundwork for the separation of church and state was prepared. Yet neither desired to push his anticlerical policies to that extreme. Waldeck jealously defended the state's prerogatives from clerical encroachments, but he was firmly attached to the principle that the Concordat of 1801 provided the only safe means of conducting church-state relations. Combes, despite the fact that he has been regarded as violently sectarian, did not devote his energies from 1902 to 1904 to the goal of separating church and state. Although his policies with respect to clerical education and the Catholic hierarchy contributed to the final crisis in church-state relations, in the end his extremist supporters found him wanting in both determination and zeal.

Though it has been necessary to divide the anticlerical campaign of 1899-1905 into two parts corresponding to the cabinets of Waldeck and Combes, this should not obscure the fact that there was only one campaign. The movement that reached its climax with the rupture of France's relations with the Vatican in 1904 was the same movement that Waldeck-Rousseau initiated with his attack upon the monastic orders in 1899. The essential unity of the period is provided by the nature of the anticlerical campaign itself. Constantly expanding and accelerating, it could not be controlled by the individuals who attempted to guide it, and both Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes were obliged by their extremist supporters to go beyond the limits they had established for themselves at the beginning of their tenure of office.

The conclusions presented in this dissertation are based upon research conducted during a ten-months stay in Paris, made possible by a grant from the Institute of International Education. Analysis of the diplomacy of anticlericalism is based upon materials in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, while the Archives du Ministère des Cultes (in the Archives Nationales) provided a wealth of information about the day-to-day conduct of anticlerical politics by Combes and Waldeck-Rousseau. The Bibliothèque Nationale offered an inexhaustible supply of materials relating to public opinion. The Waldeck-Rousseau Papers in the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France provided interesting insights into Waldeck's role in the formulation and conduct of anticlerical policies.

PREFACE

At the opening of the twentieth century, the issue of anticlericalism, which had smoldered in French politics since the Revolution, suddenly became of paramount importance. It completely dominated the political scene in France from 1899 through 1905, overshadowing every other social and political question and preoccupying the minds of leading republican figures. The anticlerical campaign inaugurated in 1899 was destined to produce momentous consequences. The Associations Law of 1901, the wholesale dissolution of certain categories of Catholic monastic orders, the suppression of monastic education, conflict between the French government and the Catholic hierarchy, and rupture of diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican were some of the more dramatic results of the anti-monastic movement. In the course of six years, a veritable revolution was wrought in the French religious establishment. As is often the case with sweeping social and political movements, the originators of the anticlerical campaign had little foresight of the consequences when they unleashed the forces hostile to the French church.

The man under whom anticlerical feeling began to reach the crisis stage was, ironically enough, a moderate in his outlook on church-state relations. René Waldeck-Rousseau became Premier in 1899, at the height of the furor raised by the Dreyfus Affair. Waldeck's chief aim was to restore order to a France torn by internal dissension and to protect the embattled institutions of the Republic from attack by nationalist and clerical agitators. This he accomplished through the application of a firm and decisive policy. Nationalist "agitators," who had supported General Boulanger in his attempt to become a dictator in the 1880's, were dealt with quickly and efficiently by the police. The "clerical menace," represented by several Catholic religious orders which had exploited the unrest caused by the Dreyfus Affair to undertake a political campaign hostile to the Republic, was more difficult to combat. Waldeck's attempt to regulate and supervise the monastic orders resulted in the enactment of the Associations Law of 1901, one of the most significant legislative acts in French republican history, and at the same time served to focus and unleash anticlerical passions that had been pent up since the founding of the Third Republic.

The evolution of the Associations Law from the rather innocuous measure proposed by Waldeck-Rousseau in 1899 to the formidable legal weapon that emerged from the national legislature in 1901 offers some interesting insights into the workings of the French parliamentary system, as well as into the general nature of French anticlericalism. It bears witness to a new anticlerical feeling which, after so many years, finally inspired a measure which would have a decisive impact upon the relations between church and state. Though the new anticlerical measure was immediately termed "the Waldeck-Rousseau Law of 1901," investigation reveals that this legislation as it emerged from Parliament bore surprisingly little resemblance to the proposal prepared for discussion by Waldeck-Rousseau. Waldeck, whose approach to the thorny issues in church-state relations was governed by rigidly legalistic and contractual concepts, hoped to secure the enactment of a law that would enable the government to deal effectively with especially troublesome religious orders without inaugurating indiscriminate reprisals against congregations that stayed within the bounds of law and performed services useful to society. But the Premier merely proposed; it was Parliament which disposed. The Chamber of Deputies, dominated by intransigent anticlericals, shaped the Associations Law in such a way that it could be used to achieve much more than a mere surveillance over the religious orders. Promulgated in July 1901, the legislation embodied principles and practices of which Waldeck-Rousseau disapproved. Waldeck enforced the new law with both caution and moderation. Then, faced with the prospects of having to direct and harness a decidedly anticlerical majority returned to the Chamber of Deputies in the election of 1902, he decided to abandon office.

With the advent of Emile Combes to power in 1902, the anticlerical campaign inaugurated by Waldeck-Rousseau gained momentum and broadened its scope. Totally unsympathetic to the principles and philosophy of monastic life, Combes used the Associations Law to suppress whole categories of unauthorized religious orders, and then finding Waldeck's law insufficient to his needs, he and his extremist supporters enacted a measure which deprived even the legalized monastic establishments of the right to educate French youth. In other respects, too, Combes carried further the attack upon the Church's prerogatives. Insisting that the state possessed supervisory and regulatory rights over the Catholic clergy, Combes engaged in a running fight with several key members of the Catholic hierarchy, and under his direction, diplomatic relations with the Vatican suffered from constantly rising tensions that culminated in the rupture of relations in 1904.

It has become customary to compare Waldeck's moderation with Combes' extremism on the issue of church-state relations, and while it is indeed true that these two men differed in the degree to which they wished to supervise and check the Church in France, this simple comparison has served to obscure several important facts. Waldeck-Rousseau, despite his avowed moderation, evidenced little aversion to suppressing troublesome religious orders such as the Assumptionists, and Waldeck shared to a certain degree the radical anticlerical prejudice against clerical education. Moreover, Waldeck-Rousseau jealously defended from "Roman" encroachments the state's concordatory privileges of nomination and supervision of the higher clergy. On the other hand, Combes, his reputation notwithstanding, was not fanatically anticlerical. Though he was willing to pursue the campaign against the Church considerably further than Waldeck, he held back from pushing the crisis of church-state relations to the point where it must result in the abrogation of the Concordat of 1801. Investigation reveals that Combes, like Waldeck-Rousseau, was largely at the mercy of his anticlerical supporters. The price of political power in the years 1899-1905 was the pursuit of an anticlerical policy, and the Radical politicians who held the whip-hand in the Palais Bourbon demanded a constantly expanding anticlerical campaign.

In this dissertation I have attempted to examine some of the more important aspects of French anticlericalism during the period 1899-1905. It has been necessary to deal with questions of education, freedom of association, social reform, and diplomacy, for all of these issues, and many others as well, were bound up in the great conflict between church and state in France at the turn of the century. For purposes of organization, I have chosen to tie this study to the ministries and personalities of Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes, who had to wrestle with the problems of church-state relations during the period. It should not be forgotten, however, that neither of these men was a free agent who directed the anticlerical movement as he pleased. Analysis of the politics of anticlericalism reveals that both men had less freedom of action than might be supposed, and that both were obliged to press the anticlerical campaign faster and further than they wished. When the twentieth century opened, the institutions of church and state in France appeared to have reached a point of no compromise, and in the eyes of many anticlerical politicians, reprisals against clerical encroachments upon secular prerogatives seemed unavoidable. The anticlerical campaign of 1899-1905 was the result of the belief of many French leaders that it was time for a reckoning between the forces of church and state. I have attempted to trace the origins, evolution, and climax of the politics of anticlericalism and to consider in some detail those questions which attached themselves to the issues involved at the opening of the twentieth century.

In conclusion, I should like to express my gratitude to Professors Joel Colton and Harold T. Parker of Duke University, who supervised the evolution of this dissertation from its inception as seminar paper and Master's thesis, and who made numerous helpful suggestions and proffered much needed encouragement. My thanks also go to the Institute of International Education for the grant which made possible ten months of research in Paris. I gratefully acknowledge the helpfulness of the staffs of the Archives Nationales, the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France. Finally, a note of special thanks to Mr. William Erwin, whose hospitality rendered numerous trips from Boone to Durham pleasurable rather than burdensome, and to my typist, Mrs. Dorothy Sapp, for her patience with illegible interpolations and last-minute revisions in the manuscript.

M. O. P.

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Chapter I

THE POLITICS OF DISORDER

André Daniel, writing in the preface of L'année politique in 1899, observed that "from the viewpoint of politics, the year . . . has certainly been the saddest and most troubled that France has known in a long time."[1] But if 1899 were indeed the "saddest and most troubled" year, it must be regarded as merely the culmination of many other difficult years that the Third French Republic had experienced during its short history.

Founded upon a humiliating defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1871, the new regime after some twenty-odd years of existence had offered little evidence that it was destined for a long or honorable life. To the satisfaction of its enemies, the Republic seemed at best to possess only a certain negative virtue. In 1871 a republic had been regarded as simply the least disagreeable among several unwelcome choices confronting the conservative politicians who had assembled at Bordeaux to provide France with some form of government after the inglorious collapse of the Second Empire at Sedan. The majority of its creators had intended the new edifice to be a temporary framework capable of providing a legal and constitutional basis for government until disgruntled royalism should be able to stage a triumphant return to France in the person of either the Comte de Chambord or the Comte de Paris. Republicans in the 1870's were oddly silent about the establishment of the Third Republic. Even Léon Gambetta, that oracle of militant republicanism, could only observe that the Republic seemed the form of government that caused the least division among Frenchmen.

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[1] L'année politique, 1899, p. iii.

From its inception the Republic had never lacked bitter enemies. Many of its detractors preferred a king or even a "petit Napoléon" to a system of government forever associated in their minds with Jacobin radicalism and the shocking deeds perpetrated in the name of French republicanism between 1792 and 1794. The Republic and republican politicians had done little to placate these enemies in the years following 1871. Indeed, new foes appeared yearly, and thus was created a dedicated opposition embodying ancient hatreds as well as recent grievances. The Third Republic's foes possessed little cohesion or common purpose save their dislike of a liberal-democratic regime. Nonetheless, they had been able to capitalize upon a series of crises apparently tailor-made to display the instability of parliamentary government and the hypocrisy of the "republican ideal." Cabinets had come and gone in such bewildering succession that government in France all too often seemed little more than a result of fleeting political combinations resting upon convenience, rather than principle. The enthusiasm with which Paris had supported General Boulanger in the late 1880's clearly demonstrated that the man on horseback and the authoritarian ideal he represented were still very powerful political factors. The Wilson scandal, involving the immediate family of a President of the Republic, and the Panama scandal, festering like an abcess before the public gaze in the early 1890's, indicated to many Frenchmen that corruption and bribery were rife among the Republic's servants. In the latter affair a number of high-ranking figures in the government and in Parliament were gravely compromised. Many sincere friends of French republicanism must have experienced misgivings about the permanence of a regime that coupled corruption in high places with chronic instability.

Needless to say, the Republic's foes were quick to capitalize upon its embarrassments. The crises of republicanism served to create an odd but potent alliance of the jaded reactionary-royalist parties with a youthful, burgeoning, irresponsible nationalist and anti-Semitic movement. The press of this new unholy alliance inundated the country with lurid stories (many of them grounded in fact) of unseemly goings-on in high places. The political climate of France was indeed stormy during the twenty-five years that followed 1871. Perhaps Gambetta had been wrong after all when he had characterized the Republic as the least divisive of possible governments.

In 1894 began yet another major crisis to vex a weary nation. The Dreyfus Affair dramatized all too clearly the irreparable division separating Frenchmen devoted to the "republican ideal" from those hostile to it. The old monarchical and imperial parties, languishing for want of a cause, were resuscitated by the passions generated during the Affair. The small but vociferous party of fanatical nationalists, vituperative and critical of the Republic's failure to regain the honor lost at Metz and Sedan, likewise found an admirable sounding board for its propaganda. Under the tutelage of Edouard Drumont, the oracle of the anti-Semitic movement, militant nationalism began to spread from its centers in Paris into the hitherto relatively untroubled provinces. And certain Catholic leaders, in whose minds the terms "republic" and "revolution" were indissolubly bound together, abandoned the policy of religious and political conciliation launched in the 1880's by Pope Leo XIII. The Dreyfus Affair not only breathed new life into old causes, it did more. It united all the dissatisfied elements in France into a militant, if not always cohesive, union. In a remarkable display of unanimity, monarchists, Bonapartists, nationalists, and clericals managed to submerge their differences. A swelling chorus of vituperation was raised against the successive governments that strove to deal with the Affair from 1894 to 1899.

The standard to which these previously disparate groups now rallied was "the honor of the Army"--an expression meaningful to Frenchmen who had experienced directly the shame of 1871 or who had grown up in its shadow. These self-styled patriots, many of whom were sincere, thought it dangerous to question the justice of the military tribunal that had condemned Alfred Dreyfus to Devil's Island. The Army symbolized France's one hope of vengeance upon the German Empire. The Army's strength would one day provide an honorable means of removing the black crepe draping the statue of Strasbourg in the Place de la Concorde. The integrity of the military leaders who had condemned Dreyfus could not be questioned without damaging the morale of the men in the ranks and undermining the French people's confidence in the high command. To impugn the Army's honor was to betray France.

Needless to say, the issues in this case were never so simply defined. It was not simply love of reason, of country, or of abstract ideals that spurred men in French politics to become "Dreyfusard" or "anti-Dreyfusard." Many who rushed headlong into the fray had private axes to grind. Some believed that when the smoke had cleared, their political careers might be advanced by having espoused Dreyfus' cause. Others were much more interested in embarrassing parliamentary government in France than in defending the integrity of the military establishment. But the motives that impelled Frenchmen to choose sides in the Affair are not really important. What is significant is the fact that by 1899, after five years of agitation, virtually every individual and organization in France had come to advocate either the Dreyfusard or the anti-Dreyfusard cause. The Church, the nationalist leagues, the monarchists, the Bonapartists, the "republicans" of all opinions, the Socialists, and the man in the street--all the major groups in France had an opinion about the case. In the course of five years the Affair had been mysteriously transmuted from a simple question of the guilt or innocence of a citizen into an ideological barometer, used by many to measure Frenchmen's attitudes toward certain fundamental tenets long espoused by the Republic. An opinion about the innocence of Alfred Dreyfus was supposed to correlate rather accurately with an attitude toward the respective virtues of liberty or authority, justice or expediency, and, in its simplest form, parliamentary government or dictatorship. By 1899, the oracles of republicanism had reached the conclusion that it was very difficult for a militant anti-Dreyfusard to be at the same time a good republican. The leaders of the anti-Dreyfusard movement, drawn largely from the ranks of intransigent nationalist and anti-Semitic groups, were equally certain that one could not be a Dreyfusard and a loyal son of France.

Thanks to this dangerous but widely accepted over-simplification, the temperature of French politics had risen alarmingly since 1894. By 1899, some observers believed civil war to be more than a remote eventuality.[1] The agitation in Paris was so acute that in June 1899 it penetrated even the confines of the Auteuil racetrack in the Bois de Boulogne. There, on June 4, President of the Republic Emile Loubet, in the presence of his wife and several dignitaries, was subjected to a shocking assault. The presidential party was first hooted by about one hundred young nationalist demonstrators sporting white boutonnieres. As Loubet was about to take his seat, a certain Baron Christiani pushed past security guards too dumfounded or indifferent to intervene and clambered into the presidential box. There he attacked Loubet with his cane. The President suffered no physical harm, but he lost his hat and his aplomb in the mêlée. Christiani was at length apprehended and led from the scene. The President also departed after a short interval, applauded by a sympathetic crowd.[1]

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[1] Abel Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée avec le Président Emile Loubet: de l'affaire Dreyfus à la conférence d'Algéciras, 1899-1906 (Paris, 1932), pp. 27-29.

His experience at Auteuil was not the first that Loubet had suffered at the hands of nationalist agitators during his short tenure in office. He had been elected early in 1899 to succeed the colorful and popular Félix Faure, who had died in the Elysée Palace under somewhat mysterious circumstances.[2] On the very day of his election, Loubet had been pelted with rotten eggs amid shouts of "Panama!" from the nationalists and "Vive le Roi, vive l'Armée!" from the royalists.[3]

The "outrage at Auteuil" was destined to produce momentous repercussions in Parliament. The government of Charles Dupuy was severely criticized for having neglected to provide adequate security measures at the track. A motion of censure condemning the government on these grounds was passed in the Chamber of Deputies, and on June 12 the eighth cabinet to hold office in six years resigned. The ensuing cabinet crisis was prolonged as President Loubet vainly sought some parliamentary leader who could assemble a majority and provide France with a government. Not surprisingly, few politicians were anxious to risk their prestige and popularity by assuming the uncongenial task of restoring order and calm at so critical a time. Brisson, Delcassé, Ribot, Méline, Poincaré--there passed into the Elysée a succession of republican luminaries in response to Loubet's summons, but all either refused to try or failed to succeed in an attempt to construct a cabinet.[1] For a period of two weeks the crisis continued amid rising tension. Then on June 23 Senator René Waldeck-Rousseau succeeded in forming a government.

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[1] Charles Morice, Quarante ans de journalisme, presse, et parlement: souvenirs et anecdotes (2 vols.; Paris, n.d.), I, 1.

[2] Gérard de Lacaze-Duthiers, C'était en 1900, souvenirs et impressions, 1895-1905 (Paris, 1957), p. 63. Rather a scandal-monger, Lacaze-Duthiers seems to be accurate, however, in asserting that Faure, wont to abuse "les plaisirs vénériens," had succumbed while in the arms of his mistress, Mme. Steinheil: "Il succomba en plein opération ... en plein travail, dans l'exercice de ses fonctions, en son palais Elyséen." Some observers suspected foul play, and the whole episode was shrouded in official secrecy in 1899.

[3] Joseph Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus (8 vols.; Paris, 1901-1908), V, 115.

Pierre Marie René Waldeck-Rousseau was fifty-three years old in 1899. Though far from being an obscure figure, he had not been in the political limelight for the preceding fifteen years. Because of his family antecedents and his personal background, however, he was well fitted to assume the premiership in the troubled atmosphere of June. There appeared no taint of royalism or Bonapartism in his ancestry; his father René Valdée (or Waldeck) had enjoyed a reputation for opposing both the July Monarchy and the Second Empire, and the family was much respected in Nantes, where young René was born. A quiet, pensive boy who suffered from defective vision in his left eye, Waldeck spent his early years in relative isolation from other children. Forbidden to read or write extensively on account of his eyesight, he received oral instruction from his mother and so perhaps developed the prodigious memory for which he was later noted. The boy's mother seems to have been the paramount influence in his early years.[2]

Waldeck subsequently received instruction at a Catholic school directed by the Bishop of Nantes, and enrolled in the School of Law at Poitiers when he was eighteen. His legal education completed in Paris in 1869, the young lawyer moved to St. Nazaire in his native Brittany to set up practice. By 1873 he had moved on to Rennes, the provincial capital, where he enjoyed almost instantaneous success. Cool, aloof, dignified, a legal prodigy, he won more than a merely local reputation for eloquent oratory, so essential to success in nineteenth-century French politics. In 1879, aged thirty-three, Waldeck-Rousseau was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. Apparently he found Paris no more difficult to conquer than Rennes; the very next year he was given the important Interior portfolio in Gambetta's "Grand Ministère" and after Gambetta's fall he continued to serve under the eminent republican, Jules Ferry. During this period Waldeck interested himself in social questions; doubtless his most significant achievement was his successful sponsorship in 1882 of legislation legalizing workers' associations.[1]

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[1] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, pp. 21-26; Morice, Quarante ans de journalisme, I, 20.

[2] Henri Leyret, Waldeck-Rousseau et la troisième république 1869-1889 (Paris, 1908), pp. 35, 43-47.

Despite his meteoric rise, Waldeck-Rousseau apparently cared little for the rough-and-tumble of republican politics in the 1880's. He retired from politics in 1889 and returned for a brief interval to private life, where he added to his stature as a barrister. Perhaps Waldeck believed that he had effectively terminated his political career in 1889, but such was not to be the case. He was elected to the Senate in 1894, the year in which the Dreyfus Affair began. Five years later came Loubet's summons, inviting him to attempt the formation of a government.[2]

To most of his political associates, Waldeck-Rousseau's personality remained highly enigmatical. Few of his closest friends claimed to know him intimately, and his enemies, needless to say, found his cold detachment an inviting target for their bitterest jibes. Joseph Caillaux, who was to become Minister of Finances in 1899, noted Waldeck's "intellectual magnificence," referring to his reasoned, logical approach to every question, and the universal

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1. Leyret, Waldeck-Rousseau, pp. 49-50ff.

2. Ibid., p. 438.

acclaim he received as a speaker.[1] Another contemporary observer, an admirer, pupil, and secretary of the great barrister was more impressed by "his extraordinary capacity for silence, his taste for solitude . . . his ever-present coldness."[2] To Paul-Boncour, however, Waldeck's detachment was in reality merely part of an elaborate façade behind which he concealed a sensitive, even timid, personality.[3]

If his admirers were less than lavish in their praise of Waldeck's personality, it may well be expected that those who held him in political or personal enmity were unsparing in their characterizations. Alexandre Zévaès summed up Waldeck-Rousseau's personality as "cold and monotonous, haughty and distant. . . . He had a horror of people and of popular movements."[4] Zévaès, a militant Socialist, had little use for Waldeck's past political career, regarding his law on workingmen's associations as in essence a restrictive measure.[5] Edouard Drumont, who became one of Waldeck's bitterest opponents, wrote that "Waldeck-Rousseau never smiled, and never had a friend."[6] To others, he was simply "the man with the eyes of a dead fish."[7]

Haughtily aloof, coldly impersonal, reserved, self-contained, and a keeper of his own counsel--so Waldeck appeared to the eyes of his contemporaries in 1899. His immaculately tailored figure, his trim mustache and the eternal cigarette between his lips were the subject of repeated comment.[1] Oblivious or indifferent to the opinion of the press or his parliamentary associates, he became the storm center of an agitation that raged more or less continuously for three years. Waldeck-Rousseau was destined to discover, if indeed he did not already know it, that the seats of the mighty are lonely indeed.

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[1] Joseph Caillaux, Mes mémoires (3 vols.; Paris, 1942-1947), I, 212.

[2] J. Paul-Boncour, Entre deux guerres: souvenirs de la troisième république (Paris, 1945), pp. 82-84.

[3] Ibid., pp. 87-88.

[4] Alexandre Zévaès, Sur l'écran politique: ombres et silhouettes. Notes, mémoires et souvenirs (Paris, 1928), pp. 282-283.

[5] Ibid., p. 283.

[6] La Libre Parole (Paris), 23 June 1899, p. 1.

[7] Lacaze-Duthiers, C'était en 1900, p. 332.

Despite his early association with Gambetta and Ferry, there was no tinge of Jacobinism in Waldeck's political past; he had been consistently numbered among the ranks of the moderate republicans during his years in Parliament. Consequently, both parliamentary and public opinion were outraged by the slate of nominees that Waldeck was prepared to propose to Loubet in the late afternoon of June 23. This successful political combination of June 23 represented Waldeck's second attempt to form a government. On June 18 he had made an effort to secure the backing of Raymond Poincaré, a leader of the moderate parliamentary republicans. After several hours of equivocation, Poincaré had refused to risk compromising his reputation by accepting a post in the proposed cabinet, and his refusal caused Waldeck-Rousseau to abandon this initial effort. A few days later he succeeded.[2] Most of the men whom Waldeck had designated for office were the reasonable, orthodox choices that any respectable republican might have made. Two, however--Alexandre Millerand and General Gallifet--were destined to cause a furor. To a great many people, a government that would include both Millerand and Gallifet was impossible even to conceive. It was in the selection of his colleagues, however, that Waldeck-Rousseau's political skill and political principles were most apparent.

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[1] Paul-Boncour, Entre deux guerres, p. 81.

[2] Handwritten, undated memorandum of Waldeck-Rousseau in Papiers de Waldeck-Rousseau, Président du Conseil des Ministres (1846-1904), (Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris), Box 4579. Cited hereafter as Waldeck-Rousseau Papers.

General Gallifet, aged seventy, was an officer of great personal and professional prestige and had long been an acquaintance of Waldeck-Rousseau.[1] The gruff old general, in retirement for several years, had served the Second Empire with considerable distinction in 1870. His selection as Minister of War was in some measure due to his reputation as a fearless officer who could inspire the Army's devotion, since he was credited with leading a famous cavalry charge at Sedan, thereby creating one of France's few glorious moments in the Franco-Prussian War.[2] But it was this same Gallifet who had been summoned by the frightened Bordeaux Assembly to suppress the Paris Commune. Gallifet had fulfilled his mission so vigorously that he had won the nickname of "the Butcher" from French Socialists.[3] Indeed, his very name was anathema to much of the French Left, both in and out of Parliament. Alexandre Zévaès wrote that Gallifet's presence in the government was "insupportable. . . . Around this man there is too much blood, nothing but blood, French blood."[4] Though aware of Gallifet's unpopularity with the Left, Waldeck-Rousseau considered the general's participation vital to the government.[5] Waldeck's immediate concern was to remove the Army from the political agitation so detrimental to its prestige and morale, and to silence some of its leaders who had been too outspoken during the Affair.[6] Gallifet seemed the one man able to force the Army chiefs to accept a revision of the Dreyfus case without goading them into open rebellion. At the same time, Gallifet's presence in the War Office was intended to reassure the Army as to the government's honorable intentions; it represented an offer of conciliation and a guarantee against wholesale reprisals.[1]

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[1] Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 167. (The Waldeck-Rousseau Papers include a correspondence with Gallifet dating from 1883.)

[2] Caillaux, Mes mémoires, I, 137.

[3] Zévaès, Sur l'écran politique, pp. 286-296.

[4] Ibid., p. 286.

[5] Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 171.

[6] Undated memorandum of Waldeck-Rousseau, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4579.

The choice of Alexandre Millerand for the commerce portfolio was equally well grounded in a shrewd appraisal of the current political scene. Gallifet would pacify the Army; Millerand, it was hoped, would guarantee the new cabinet the cooperation of the parliamentary Socialists, of whom Millerand was considered a leader since Jean Jaurès had failed to win election in 1898.[2] By 1899, Millerand's position was with the right wing of the Socialist bloc in the Chamber of Deputies.[3] In 1896, in the course of a speech at St. Mandé, he had presented the platform of reformist socialism: the socialization of all private property, and international cooperation among workers.[4] He was a spokesman for "collectivism" but not for revolution. Despite his moderate position, however, his critics and opponents continued to assail him, never wearying of recalling the "St. Mandé Program." When he accepted the commerce portfolio in 1899, Millerand became the first French Socialist ever to serve in a "bourgeois" government. That fact alone galled many intransigent Socialists, and coupled with Gallifet's presence in the cabinet, it became intolerable. The Socialist Party, always prey to factionalism, was split because of Millerand's joining the government.[5] Many of his comrades professed to see in his action a

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1. Undated memorandum of Waldeck-Rousseau, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4579.

2. Caillaux, Mes mémoires, I, 119.

3. Revue politique et parlementaire, XXI (August, 1899), 376.

4. Zévaès, Sur l'écran politique, p. 269.

5. Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 175-176. According to this source, Millerand was unaware of Gallifet's inclusion when he agreed to serve.

willingness to abandon socialist principles in order to heed the siren song of political power,[1] but Waldeck's hopes of securing socialist support for his program were largely realized, since most of the parliamentary party cast its lot with Millerand, and the recalcitrant minority, though suspicious of Waldeck, resentful of Millerand's apostasy, and ideologically offended by Gallifet's presence, usually managed to overcome these scruples and supported the cabinet against nationalists and reactionaries on key issues.[2]

Waldeck termed his creation a "republican concentration"; that is, a combination that included all shades of republican opinion. "How can I reconcile my opinions with those of my associates?" he wrote. "I admit that we have different ideas about the evolution of society, about the duties of the state. . . . But above these differences we value a common ideal: the republican ideal."[3] In Waldeck's opinion the agitation arising from the Dreyfus Affair had greatly endangered the Republic and its trinitarian conception of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Indeed, it had done more: the passions generated during the preceding four years had so disturbed the traditional political equilibrium of France that the old distinctions and boundaries between France's multitude of parties had been distorted beyond recognition and utility. There remained only one course of action open to republicans if they would save the Republic from the menace of authoritarianism: they must submerge their differences and cooperate in defense of the regime.[4] With this guiding principle in mind, Waldeck had constructed a cabinet which included, along with its moderate majority, the extremes represented by Gallifet and Millerand. Though this political combination gave rise to serious misgivings among ideological purists on both Left and Right, there was indeed one common factor binding together this strange cabinet and its partisans: all the individuals included had supported Dreyfus and the "republican ideal" during the recent agitation. Waldeck emphasized this bond when he styled his ministry the Cabinet of Republican Defense. The opponents of the cabinet, likewise perceiving from whence came the mortar holding together its disparate factions, lost no time in labelling it the "Dreyfus Cabinet" or simply the "Bloc."[1]

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[1] Zévaès, Sur l'écran politique, pp. 273-276.

[2] Ibid., pp. 282-285.

[3] Undated, handwritten memorandum of Waldeck-Rousseau, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4579.

[4] Ibid.

Having the cabinet approved by the Chamber of Deputies proved a trying ordeal for all concerned, as Waldeck must have foreseen. The Palais Bourbon, despite the French reputation for logic and lucidity, was not noted in the annals of the Third Republic as a chamber where calm and rational discussion prevailed. In the words of a contemporary observer, the daily routine of the Chamber was ". . . incessant agitation, shouted interpellations accompanied by cries, insults, threats and sometimes by an exchange of blows, . . . of daily campaigns in the cloakrooms aimed at unseating the men in power. . . ."[2] After four years of enjoying the Olympian calm that reigned in the Luxembourg Palace where the Senate sat, Waldeck quickly learned the meaning of the rough and ready politics of the Chamber. Scarcely had the prospective cabinet members penetrated the precincts of the Palais Bourbon on June 26 when bedlam ensued. Gallifet was greeted with cries of "Vive la Commune!" from the militant Socialists, and Millerand's presence precipitated a similar uproar on the opposite side of the hall.[3] The demonstration, lasting several minutes, visibly shook Waldeck-Rousseau; it was noted that his hand trembled as he read the ministerial declaration.[1] The demonstration had been organized by Alexandre Zévaès and other intransigent Socialists and its intensity seems to have taken everyone by surprise.[2] It nearly prevented the new cabinet from being launched.

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[1] La Libre Parole, 21 September 1899, p. 1.

[2] Morice, Quarante ans de journalisme, I, 19.

[3] France, Annales de la chambre des députés, Débats parlementaires, LVIII (26 June 1899), 498-499. Cited hereafter as Annales, Chambre.

In a voice frequently inaudible above the shouts and exclamations from the floor, Waldeck-Rousseau called upon the assembled deputies to rally to the support of the imperiled Republic and to "vote without delay laws necessary to the preservation of public order."[3] When Waldeck regained his seat, it was a matter of grave doubt whether the cabinet would obtain the requisite vote of confidence. But René Viviani rallied the Socialists, and Henri Brisson, venerable chief of the Radicals, threw his support behind the Premier-designate.[4] Waldeck must have been embittered by the refusal of the Progressist Party--the party of Gambetta, Ferry, and of Waldeck himself during his years as a deputy--to give the cabinet its unanimous support. Because of Millerand's inclusion only about half of its large bloc of votes went to Waldeck and his associates.[5] When the vote of confidence was taken, the cabinet was approved by a narrow margin, 262-237. General Gallifet, who found the session of June 26 almost intolerable, wrote Waldeck the following day: "I am sorry for all the difficulties you encountered yesterday on my account. You had all the pain, but I too have received the maximum degree of abuse, in and out of Parliament."[6]

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1. Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 188.

2. Zévaès, Sur l'écran politique, pp. 196-197.

3. Annales, Chambre, LVIII (26 June 1899), 498-499.

4. Caillaux, Mes mémoires, I, 123. Caillaux credited Brisson with saving the day.

5. Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 190-192; Annales, Chambre, LVIII (26 June 1899), 498-500.

6. Letter of General Gallifet to Waldeck-Rousseau, Paris, 27 June 1899, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4567.

The defection of the moderates was to have important consequences for the policies formulated by Waldeck's government. The new cabinet was of necessity based upon the so-called Left in the Chamber of Deputies. Radicals and Radical-Socialists, despite their names, were in reality spokesmen for the bourgeoisie; aside from their perennial advocacy of the income tax, their most constant characteristic was a determined anticlericalism that often led them to militate for separation of church and state.[1] The Socialists, though split into several groups in Parliament and often in violent disagreement among themselves as to the speed and completeness with which French Socialism should evolve, were nonetheless in accord on the necessity of certain basic social reforms, and were unanimous also in their desire to destroy the powers of the Roman Catholic Church.[2] The Progressists, about half of whom supported Waldeck, occupied the center benches in the Chamber of Deputies. The party generally favored moderate social reform and was only mildly anticlerical.[3] The more conservative elements among the Progressists were followers of Jules Méline and had refused to support Waldeck on account of Millerand's presence in the cabinet. It was because of the intransigence of the Mélinists that Waldeck would be forced to depend upon the good will and support of the radical Left in carrying through his program regarding the nationalist agitators and the Catholic religious orders.

Waldeck-Rousseau, moderate in his approach to social and political questions, was not at ease in basing his government upon support from the radical parties.[4] There were some responsible leaders among the Progressists who realized the predicament of the Premier, and who foresaw the possible consequences of the moderates' policy. Charles Jonnart, Waldeck's personal friend and a leader in Progressist circles, felt

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[1] Léon Jacques, Les partis politiques sous la troisième république (Paris, 1913), pp. 227-235.

[2] Ibid., pp. 266ff.

[3] Ibid., pp. 201-208.

[4] Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 174-177.

> quite put out at the attitude of several of my friends when you patriotically tried to assemble in your support the representatives of the different republican factions. Fortunately you understand that you must not be disturbed by the bad humor, blindness, or inordinate ambition of those who through disloyalty or foolish lack of foresight are chiefly responsible for the present situation. . . . A political party may not with impunity desert the cause of right and justice. . . . It gives me great pain to see that the moderate party, with a few exceptions, has committed this error.[1]

Despite the inauspicious beginnings made in Parliament, most republicans in Paris appeared to welcome the formation of the cabinet with profound relief; some observers regarded the accession of Waldeck-Rousseau as the salvation of the Republic.[2] Few, however, regarded the new government as more than a makeshift which would dissolve once the current crisis had passed.[3] In Waldeck's own phrase, the cabinet would have to "navigate upon a sea of sabres."[4] Joseph Reinach, who was close to the Premier during this period, observed that if Parliament had not adjourned for the summer shortly after approving the cabinet, Waldeck "would not have lasted a day."[5] Despite the threatening storm clouds on the political horizon, the Premier approached his difficult mission with a degree of optimism and an iron determination to succeed. When the Chamber of Deputies adjourned on June 29 amid the usual cries of "Long live the

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[1] Letter of Charles Jonnart to Waldeck-Rousseau, Juan-les-Pins, 23 June 1899, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4568.

[2] Morice, Quarante ans de journalisme, I, 1.

[3] Caillaux, Mes mémoires, I, 121.

[4] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 26.

[5] Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 185.

Republic," Waldeck was heard to say: "Calm yourselves, it will live."[1]

Winning parliamentary approval was merely a preliminary, though essential, victory for the Waldeck-Rousseau government. The real test of its ability and resources—removing the Army from political controversy, revising the Dreyfus case, and restoring public order—still lay ahead in the summer of 1899. Uppermost in the Premier's thoughts was the Army. Until it was obvious to all France that the Army was firmly under Gallifet's control, there could be no general pacification of the country. It must be apparent, however, that the cabinet had no intention of interfering in military affairs. Whatever was done must be done by Gallifet, whose prestige and authority none could question. "I do not wish to be watched, and I do not need to be seconded," the general had written upon taking office. "In the interest of pacification as well as of maintaining discipline within the Army, I must face the Army alone and stand between it and the cabinet."[2] On another occasion, Gallifet reminded Waldeck that "it must be understood that we love, protect, and defend the Army, while at the same time we hold it strictly within its prescribed limits."[3] Though he realized the impossibility of launching wholesale reprisals against high-ranking officers compromised by indiscreet acts or words during the Affair, Gallifet did relieve several generals of their commands and transferred them to some quite undesirable posts. A few organizational changes were also made within the military establishment.[4]

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1. Caillaux, _Mes mémoires_, I., 172.

2. Letter of General Gallifet to Waldeck-Rousseau, Paris, 27 June 1899, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4567.

3. Undated letter of General Gallifet to Waldeck-Rousseau, in _ibid_.

4. Paul-Boncour, _Entre deux guerres_, p. 99. This writer quotes the famous dictum ascribed to Gallifet, which aptly illustrates the general's methods: "Général Un Tel. Parlait bien. Parlait trop. Je l'ai cassé."

Even the crusty old general, however, was unable to force the military courts to revoke their condemnation of Dreyfus. The latter had been returned to France from Devil's Island for a re-trial at Rennes in the hope that a court martial, in the light of new evidence, would exonerate him from all charges. On September 9, to the general stupefaction of most observers, the court martial again condemned Dreyfus, this time to ten years' imprisonment in consideration of what were termed "extenuating circumstances." Dreyfus immediately appealed this verdict to the Cour de Cassation. Waldeck-Rousseau personally favored a judicial quashing of the Rennes verdict, but Gallifet observed that such a procedure would be prejudicial to the Army.[1] Accordingly, it was decided that after a "respectable interval" the government would grant Dreyfus a full pardon.[2] Though this solution seemed very much like an equivocation and as such was opposed by several Dreyfusard leaders, the accused was at length persuaded to withdraw his appeal to the Cour de Cassation, and on September 19, 1899, President Loubet issued the pardon.[3] Though its repercussions would continue to influence French politics for years to come, the Dreyfus Affair may be considered to have begun to fade from the front ranks of political questions with the pardon of 1899.

While Gallifet concerned himself with the Army, Waldeck-Rousseau had given his personal attention to quelling the nationalist disturbances that threatened to flare into civil disorder. Upon assuming office, the Premier had replaced the Prefect of Police and the Attorney General with his appointees.[4]

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[1] Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 537-538.

[2] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 39.

[3] Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, V, 559-565; Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 39.

[4] Paul-Boncour, Entre deux guerres, p. 103.

Having thus assured himself of a firm grip upon the reins of administrative power, Waldeck was ready to move against the nationalist agitators who had long troubled the political atmosphere. Two of the more active nationalist organizations were the Ligue de la Patrie Française, headed by Jules Lemaitre and the poet François Coppée, and the more extreme Ligue des Patriotes, led by Paul Déroulède. In August the government announced the discovery of a plot hatched by Déroulède, Jules Guérin, and other extremists of the Ligue des Patriotes calling for the overthrow of the Republic. Déroulède had publicly attempted (and failed) to persuade a detachment of troops quartered in Paris to march on the Elysée and turn out President Loubet.[1] After Déroulède's arrest, Guérin barricaded himself and several of his followers in the headquarters of the Ligue des Patriotes in Rue Chabrol, where he maintained a comic-opera resistance until a police blockade forced him from "Fort Chabrol" into submission over a month later.[2] Some seventy-five conspirators were apprehended, but reprisals were slight. Déroulède, Guérin, and one or two other ringleaders were sentenced to banishment for ten years; most of the others involved in the plot were released.[3] Waldeck's handling of the nationalist agitation won warm praise from President Loubet, who of all the Republic's servants had endured the most abuse from Guérin, Déroulède, and others of their stripe. Loubet wrote the Premier in the following terms:

> I heartily approve the measures taken in regard to Guérin. Assuredly it is better to be accused of weakness (without plausible reason, moreover) than to have a bloody conflict. . . . You are defending the government with courage and energy. . . . You and

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[1] Paul-Boncour, Entre deux guerres, p. 111.

[2] L'année politique, 1899, p. 270.

[3] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 43.

> your colleagues are executing the program of defense approved by the Chamber of Deputies, and I really hope for success despite the troubles of the present hour. Whatever others may say, I still believe that the immense majority of the country is very attached to the Republic, but I am saddened to see that every ten years or so there must be a struggle to uphold it. I continue to think that the press legislation is a principal cause of this agitation.[1]

With these decisive yet moderate measures, Waldeck-Rousseau clearly demonstrated that his government had no intention of vacillating in its dealings with the disturbers of public order. As a consequence, much of the tension and anxiety that had characterized French politics during the preceding years were slowly dissipated. Though the problems regarding the Army and the nationalists were moving toward an acceptable solution by early fall, there remained yet one other major obstacle to the government's project of restoring order: the question of how to deal with certain political-minded orders of the Catholic Church; orders that had played all too large a part in the Dreyfus Affair. In the long run, this was destined to prove the most vexing problem of all, and would monopolize the cabinet's attention for the next two and one-half years.

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1. Letter of President Emile Loubet to Waldeck-Rousseau, Rambouillet, 20 August 1899, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4568.

Chapter II

THE ENACTMENT OF THE ASSOCIATIONS LAW

The French state and the Catholic religious orders had long regarded each other with a hostility verging upon open warfare. The existence of such hostility was not unusual, for rivalry between the civil and religious powers for the total loyalty of men has been part of the history of many modern nations. In France, however, a centuries-old conflict between church and state had been greatly embittered by the events of the French Revolution. During the period between 1789 and 1792 the Catholic Church, because of its association with some of the more unenlightened aspects of the Old Regime, had suffered a drastic curtailment of its wealth, privilege, and prestige. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy effectively removed the Church from its exalted position and attempted to reduce its clergy to the role of civil servants. Later, when the Jacobins seized control of the Revolution, priests, nuns, and monks had suffered an active persecution which was not soon forgiven or forgotten. It was not until Napoleon I, seeking the support of French Catholics and the clergy, undertook the negotiation of the Concordat of 1801 that a measure of official harmony was restored to church-state relations. Because of the excesses of the revolutionary period, the Church in France acquired a thorough distrust of movements associated with the liberal ideology of progress and reform. In France, where the political animosities of one age often linger to become the political traditions of another, memories of the outrages inflicted by the First Republic upon the Church were not easily dispelled. In time the terms liberal, radical, Jacobin, republican, and revolutionary became interchangeable in the minds of many Catholic clergymen and laymen.

The Third Republic, simply because it was a republic, had therefore inherited a certain amount of clerical hostility. And since most republican leaders felt that a republic best gave concrete expression to the stirring ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, they, like some clergymen, also believed that the ideologies of republicanism and revolution were inseparable. Though it was often lip-service, the leaders of republican France liked to pay frequent homage to "the ideals of 1789." This statement of allegiance did little to help reconcile church and state.

Unfortunately, the Catholic clergy and Catholic lay leaders had generally supported monarchist aspirations in the years immediately following 1871, believing that the Third Republic was not destined to a longer life than its two predecessors. By 1880, however, responsible Catholics whose eyes were not clouded by dreams of a royalist revival began to revise their views regarding the republican regime's durability. They were further encouraged in their reappraisal by Pope Leo XIII, a pontiff whose political and social views were to effect virtually a revolution in the Church's policies. Animated by an admiration for French culture as well as by a desire for a genuine reconciliation with France, Leo launched the "Ralliement" in the mid-1880's. This policy was designed to persuade French Catholics to accept the Republic as a legitimate form of government. In effect, Leo XIII's program forced most French Catholic leaders--with the exception of certain intransigents--to cut loose from the decaying monarchist parties and to throw in their lot with the Republic. By 1894, the Ralliement, though not uniformly successful, had prevailed to the point where friction between church and state was noticeably reduced. Then came the Dreyfus Affair, stirring up old grievances and reviving ancient passions. In time the Catholic Church, like every other organization in France, was drawn into the maelstrom. The Church's failure to remain aloof from political controversy proved to be the undoing of the Ralliement, for the Church, represented by certain members of the episcopacy, a goodly number of curés and abbés, and especially some of its monastic orders, had espoused the anti-Dreyfusard cause. This does not mean that the Catholic Church and its orders were unanimously anti-Dreyfusard. But enough churchmen were sufficiently vocal in their pronouncements to gain the attention of anticlerical republicans, who marked them as easy targets once the Affair should be liquidated. Since the religious orders had distinguished themselves in the anti-Dreyfusard agitation, it was not surprising that they should come to bear the brunt of the anticlerical attack.

One order had gained particular notoriety in republican eyes during the course of the Dreyfus Affair. This was the relatively new Order of the Assumptionist Fathers, situated in one of the smarter Parisian quarters. It had displayed its lack of political wisdom by carrying on a violent anti-Dreyfusard (and by implication, anti-republican) campaign in its newspaper, La Croix. The most blatant manifestation of the Assumptionists' disregard for political discretion came during the parliamentary elections of 1898, when the order had actively supported candidates known to be hostile to the Republic.[1] As soon as it became apparent that calm was being restored to the country at large, Waldeck-Rousseau lost little time in dealing with this order. The

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[1] France, Archives Nationales. F^{19}, Archives du Ministère des Cultes. Box 1960, Affaire de l'Assomptionistes, documents et mémoranda preparées par le Ministère des Cultes, 1898-1900. (The designation F^{19} covers the whole of the Archives du Ministère des Cultes now to be found in the Archives Nationales. Future references to materials found in the Archives du Ministère des Cultes will be made by citing the series F^{19}, followed by box number and title of box; e.g., Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1960, Affaire de l'Assomptionistes, ...).

Assumptionists were dissolved by judicial decree in January 1900, and each monk was fined for his electoral activities.[1] When a few high-ranking members of the Catholic hierarchy protested the order's dissolution, Waldeck was quick to retaliate. The Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Richard, had visited members of the order after they were dispersed. The government regarded this act as an open declaration of sympathy for the Assumptionists and consequently an act of defiance against the government's procedures. Waldeck-Rousseau (who in addition to being Prime Minister was also Minister of the Interior and Minister of Cults) wrote Cardinal Richard a stinging letter of reprimand, charging him with attempting to "encourage the Assumptionists to persevere in their work. Your action, in light of the circumstances attending it, assumes the character of a public protest against a decision of the judiciary. . . ."[2]

At about the time of Richard's reprimand, which ought to have served as ample warning to others of the episcopacy, fourteen bishops or archbishops publicly expressed sympathy for the Assumptionists. Waldeck punished six of these prelates by ordering that their salaries be indefinitely suspended,[3] and instructed his Foreign Minister, Théophile Delcassé, to call Pope Leo XIII's

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1. Revue politique et parlementaire, XXIII (February, 1900), 481.

2. Arch. Nat. F19 1960, Affaire de l'Assomptionistes . . . Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Cardinal Richard, Paris, 20 January 1900.

3. Ibid., Note pour les 2ème et 7ème Bureaux, 13 février 1900. The state claimed the right of suspending ecclesiastical salaries on the grounds that the clergy, under the terms of the Concordat of 1801, were salaried members of the civil service and were therefore bound by the same rules that governed the behavior of other fonctionnaires. This interpretation, which failed to take any account of the special functions of the clergy, had given rise to several disputes in the past. The state's right of suspension was clearly enunciated by an opinion of the Council of State in 1883; its reasoning in part ran as follows: "Considering that the state possesses a superior right over the whole of the public services—a right of supervision and surveillance by virtue of its sovereignty; considering that, for the fulfillment of its duties, the government is invested with disciplinary powers over all who are in any capacity whatsoever paid from the public treasury, . . ." the government therefore had a legal right to suspend ecclesiastical salaries for disciplinary purposes.

attention to the activities of two prelates in particular: Archbishop Gouthe-Soulard of Aix, and Bishop Cotton of Valence. Waldeck regarded these two churchmen as especially troublesome and even went so far as to hope for their immediate resignation.[1]

It was Alexandre Millerand who was chosen by Waldeck-Rousseau to proclaim officially the government's intention of initiating further anti-monastic actions. In a speech at Lille on October 16, 1899, Millerand made the following remarks, the implications of which escaped no one:

> The Premier said a few days ago that the government will soon introduce a bill concerning the right of association. . . . The Republic is not an oppressive or intolerant regime, but it cannot permit persons, under the guise of religion, to carry on a campaign against it.[2]

The Republican Defense Cabinet was not acting without precedent when it undertook to regulate the existence of the religious orders. Whether republican, monarchical, or imperial in form, the French state had traditionally regarded the activities of certain monastic establishments with deep distrust. Though most Frenchmen seemed inclined to view the work of charitable and nursing orders as beneficial and even desirable, the same attitude did not prevail where the teaching and preaching orders were concerned. Through the years, therefore, the state had developed certain techniques whereby it exercised some measure of supervision over the monasteries' growth and wealth. Customary procedure required all religious orders to apply to the government for legal authorization to exist and to possess property in France. Those orders failing to receive authorization, or whose authorization was subsequently revoked, were subject to dissolution and expulsion from the country.[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1960, Affaire de l'Assomptionistes . . . Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Théophile Delcassé, Paris, 22 January 1900. In the matter of resignation, the government had no power; Waldeck could merely express his disapproval of the bishops' actions and could suspend their salaries, but these were the legal limits of his authority. Bishops owed their spiritual functions to papal investiture, and could continue to perform their spiritual duties until they were revoked by papal decree.

[2] Le Temps (Paris), 17 October 1899, p. 1.

The state's prerogative of supervising the existence of the Catholic regular clergy, asserted in laws of 1794, 1817, 1825, and 1834, reinforced by Articles 291-293 of the Penal Code and by innumerable additional decrees and ordinances[2] had proven remarkably ineffectual. The unauthorized orders, defying the formidable array of laws and decrees, had never ceased to exist. Indeed, they had continued to grow in wealth and membership. The Jesuits, whose preaching and teaching activities had long made them suspect to French governments,[3] provide a typical example of the behavior of many unauthorized orders. The Jesuit Order was first dissolved in 1764 and its properties sold at auction, but forty years later Napoleon I found it sufficiently annoying and powerful to decree dissolution once again. Undaunted, the Jesuits soon returned (if indeed they had ever departed) and were suppressed by decree in 1880 during Jules Ferry's administration.[4] Yet only twenty years later the order was again openly established and flourishing to such an extent that its property holdings were estimated at 49,000,000 francs.[5]

This account of the Jesuits could be applied to practically every unauthorized order during the years between 1871 and 1900. Despite existing legislation, the number of congregations (the term does not denote separate orders such as Jesuits or Dominicans, but refers to the dependent establishments of these parent houses) had reached 1,517, of which number 774 had no legal right to existence.[1] In women's congregations, the number of unauthorized nuns in France had reached 75,083 by 1901.[2] These figures are at best only approximations, as the Ministère des Cultes admitted; the difficulties involved in accurately tabulating the congregations and their membership were compounded because members were constantly moving from one establishment to another.[3] The total wealth possessed by all the orders was the subject of considerable speculation. In 1900 the Ministère des Finances conducted an inquiry into this matter and subsequently placed the total monastic wealth at over a billion francs, a figure that most churchmen claimed was unrealistically high.[4]

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[1] Arthur Galton, Church and State in France, 1300-1907 (London, 1907), p. 239.

[2] Le concordat, les congrégations religieuses (Paris, 1880), pp. 156-163.

[3] Arch. Nat. F19 2002, Papiers de M. Dumay, Directeur des Cultes. Memorandum of 1880 instructing the prefects to exercise special surveillance over Jesuits in the provinces.

[4] Revue politique et parlementaire, XXVII (January, 1901), 58-67.

[5] Le Temps, 7 January 1901, p. 1.

The undeniable failure of the supervisory laws was largely attributable to two factors: determined resistance by the congregations, and indifferent enforcement of existing legislation by the government. The religious orders had traditionally shown the greatest disinclination to submit to civil authority, apparently believing that their religious mission exempted them from obeying laws restricting their operations. They evaded authorization, since to recognize the government's power to grant such authorization implied recognition of its right to supervise and even interfere in their affairs. They likewise usually managed to avoid paying taxes on their property.[5] On the other hand, no regime since the Revolution (when all orders had been suppressed) had made a determined effort to see that the existing laws were strictly enforced. The Third Republic witnessed no significant departure from this precedent before 1899. The conservatives and monarchists who controlled the government during the Republic's infancy were openly favorable to the Church because they desired the active political support of the clergy.[1] When the republicans came into their own, this lax attitude was only slightly modified. Gambetta, despite his famous pronouncement, "Le cléricalisme--voilà l'ennemi!" had not pursued a truly radical policy in regard to the congregations.[2] And Jules Ferry, during whose administration a number of "laic laws" were enacted, likewise evidenced little real desire to push matters to a conclusion with the Church.[3] After the commencement of the Ralliement, it seemed to many that peace was about to be restored between the Church and her "eldest daughter." To be sure, anticlericalism still existed during these years and was sporadically pursued as a policy. But it seemed to lack real conviction; it was the fulfillment of something expected of a republican government whenever it seemed desirable to rally Frenchmen to the abstract ideals of "the Revolution."[4]

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[1] Le Temps, 7 January 1901, p. 1.

[2] Arch. Nat. F19 6244, Recensement des établissements ou associations congréganistes existent au 1er janvier 1901 en France et en Algérie.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Le Temps, 26 November 1900, p. 1.

[5] Revue politique et parlementaire, XXVII (January, 1901), 69.

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[1] Galton, Church and State in France, pp. 231-241.

[2] Antonin Debidour, L'église catholique et l'état sous la troisième république (2 vols.; Paris, 1906-1909), II, 6.

[3] Ibid., pp. 6-9.

[4] This "paper tiger" attitude of Ferry and other republican leaders is especially well documented in the correspondence between Paris and the Vatican during the 1880's. One letter, by Ferry himself, was written in hopes of winning papal approval; Ferry offered to halt proceedings that would have resulted in the suspension of bishops' salaries. (Arch. Nat. F19 1943, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1881-1906. Letter of Jules Ferry to Comte Lefebvre de Béhaine, Ambassador to the Vatican, Paris, 20 June 1883). Other letters in this file indicate that France desired the Vatican's aid in expanding her influence in the Far East.

Unfortunately, however, the Dreyfus Affair had by 1899 effectively ruined any hopes for a real understanding between the Republic and the Church. Republicans had been frightened by the violence engendered by the Affair. Now that the Republic was apparently saved, their immediate reaction was not one of forgiveness, but of anger.

Waldeck-Rousseau, in his dual capacity as Minister of the Interior and Minister of Cults, had the responsibility for preparing legislation concerning the right of association for both secular and religious purposes. The Associations bill was drawn up by the fall of 1899 and introduced in the Chamber of Deputies on November 14. The proposal was divided into two parts, the first of which granted wider liberties of formation to certain laic organizations such as labor unions and learned societies. The second part of the bill was concerned with the religious orders[1] and aimed at controlling their future formation and growth. This control was to be secured by dissolving and dispersing the most objectionable of the presently unauthorized orders and by requiring governmental authorization for all congregations that might be formed in the future.[2] It will be readily seen that in its original form the Associations bill proposed nothing really new; it merely restated principles long recognized but only intermittently upheld since the Old Regime.

Waldeck-Rousseau attempted to justify his bill by asserting that such legislation was necessary for the defense of the Republic. In a speech before the Chamber of Deputies on November 16, the Premier made some illuminating remarks on the project, in which the idea of self-defense played a prominent role:

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[1] In his version of the Associations bill, Waldeck nowhere used the terms "congregation" or "religious order." Instead he chose to refer to the orders as "associations whose members live in common," or "associations composed of Frenchmen and foreigners." See below, p. 36.

[2] *L'année politique*, 1899, p. 424.

> All states, whatever their nature, obey certain common and unvarying rules; and for all governments, whatever their nature, . . . there is an inescapable law that all must obey: it is the law of self-preservation. A democracy, however, does not seek to divorce its preservation from the idea of progress. The program that the government is submitting to Parliament is a program of progress and defense.[1]

In accordance with French parliamentary practice, the Associations bill went to an ad hoc commission whose duty it was to study the proposal, discuss necessary modifications, and examine amendments proposed by individual deputies. The powers of such a parliamentary commission were formidable: it could alter a bill to the point of mutilation. Commission sessions were usually secret and only the cabinet minister responsible for the bill, a few high officials named by the minister, and the authors of amendments could appear before it. No outsider, including the minister concerned, might be present when the commission voted to determine its final decisions. A reporter for the bill, chosen by the commission, wielded considerable influence; it was not impossible for the reporter to go directly against the known wishes of the government.[2]

The Associations Commission[3] consisted of twenty-two members, of whom six were Radical-Socialists, four were Radicals, and two were Socialists. All of these parties, it should be noted, were by reputation decidedly anticlerical. The Progressist Party had five representatives on the commission. Of the parties definitely hostile to the cabinet, there were only two representatives. Significantly, both the commission's president, M. Sarrien, and reporter, Georges Trouillot, were Radicals.[1]

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LIX (16 November 1899), 42.

[2] Walter Rice Sharp, The Government of the French Republic (New York, 1938), p. 115.

[3] This commission had been created in December of 1898 to study a large number of private bills concerning the right of association. Chief among these were the proposals of Charles Gras, Socialist; Abbé Lemire, Progressist; and Cunéo d'Ornano, Bonapartist. The Charles Gras bill provided free association for all societies except those "whose members live in common"--i.e., religious orders; it prevented all associations from acquiring property, and provided that religious associations in violation of the law could be dissolved by an executive order. The other two proposals made no distinction between laic and religious associations; both stipulated that all associations could acquire property, and neither proposal would necessitate a law or decree to authorize all associations. These three proposals, in addition to some twenty-nine others were already before the commission when Waldeck presented his bill

Waldeck's bill was presented to the Associations Commission in November 1899, and from the beginning there was disagreement between the Premier and the commission over the nature and purpose of the proposed legislation. Waldeck-Rousseau intended to bring the religious orders into line with established legal principles and traditions, and his view of the proper relations between the congregations and the state was essentially a contractual one. Several influential members of the commission, on the other hand, were intent upon punishing the orders for real or imagined misdeeds and consequently had little patience or sympathy with Waldeck's rigidly legalistic views. Waldeck appeared before the commission several times in order to clarify his conception of the bill, but it is obvious that he was usually unsuccessful in bringing the intransigent anticlericals around to accepting his ideas. Consequently, the version of the Associations bill that was eventually debated in the Chamber of Deputies differed significantly from the one that Waldeck had sent to the commission for study.

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in November, 1899. The commission had done very little work prior to November, and it quickly adopted Waldeck's bill as a basis for discussion. The other bills were not completely abandoned, however, and some of their points were subsequently tacked onto the government's project. (Arch. Nat. Chambre des députés, 7^{e} législature. Commission chargée d'examiner des propositions de loi . . . sur le droit d'association. Dossier No. 381, Projet de loi relatif au contrat d'association. Hereafter cited as Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381.)

[1] Le Temps, 17 November 1899, p. 1.

Georges Trouillot exemplified the hostility that many members of the commission felt for the Catholic Church and its religious orders. He was a much more determined opponent of the Church than was Waldeck, and Trouillot appeared quite willing to pursue anticlerical policies beyond the bounds envisioned by the Premier. On one occasion during the commission's proceedings, Trouillot reminded his fellow members that

> we have always upheld the idea that the Law on Associations is the preface to a separation of church and state; that the clerical peril must never be forgotten; that the Pope, a foreign sovereign, exercises an influence equivalent to the power of command over Catholic society; and that laic society must be protected from this influence.[1]

On this question as on several others, it is obvious that Trouillot's conception of his duties included much more than preparing a bill that would merely supervise the orders. In his report, which he drew up when the commission was engaged in debating certain general features of the Associations bill, the reporter noted that the present government's bill was little more than a compromise proposal when compared with previous legislative projects. "Many will judge, " he wrote, "that it sins by excessive tolerance rather than by excessive severity."[2]

The Associations bill had been prepared for discussion by its commission in December of 1900, but debate on it only began the last of February, 1901. Until March 6 the Chamber of Deputies was occupied with the bill's first twelve articles, dealing with general liberty of association. On March 7, Article 13, the first one relating specifically to the religious orders, came under discussion.

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1. Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Session of 7 March 1900.

2. Ibid., Rapport presenté à la commission par M. Georges Trouillot, sur les diverses propositions relatives au droit d'association dont les Chambres ont été saisies depuis 1871.

As presented to the Chamber of Deputies, Article 13 provided that

> no religious congregation may be formed without authorization conferred by a law that will determine the conditions of its functioning. . . . Dissolution of the congregation or the closing of its establishments may be carried out by an executive decree.[1]

Article 13 was based upon the recognized legal concept of the "civil personality," as Waldeck had been at pains to note when he had first introduced the bill in November 1899:

> Every association must acquire what in legal terminology is called civil personality. It has seemed necessary to us to define this concept because to define the civil personality is to justify at the same time the necessity of the state's intervening to grant it. . . . No association may be legally formed without a sort of intervening pact between the association and the state.[2]

Here again is the idea of a contractual agreement between association and state, an idea that Waldeck regarded as of paramount importance. Both parties to the contract would have their respective roles to fulfill; both would have duties and obligations. If the association failed to fulfill its duties, or if it strayed away from the objectives that were mutually agreed upon in the law authorizing its formation, then the state was empowered to abrogate the contract and thereby dissolve the association.[3] The concept of civil personality was far from being an innovation. It had been the basis for much of the existing legislation governing the religious orders' existence. Under French law, two legal personalities might acquire property rights: individuals and "civil persons"--i.e., formally constituted companies and corporations.[4] Civil personality was conferred upon an association by a formal law or decree

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1. Annales, Chambre, LXIII (7 March 1901), 805.

2. L'année politique, 1899, p. 418.

3. Ibid.

4. Galton, Church and State in France, p. 239.

of authorization when the association was formed. Therefore an authorized religious order would have the right to possess property; an unauthorized one would be beyond the pale of the law and its property subject to forfeiture.[1]

Though the concept of civil personality accorded well with Waldeck's views, the version of Article 13 that found its way to the floor of the Chamber of Deputies represented the labors of the commission. When he prepared his draft of the bill in 1899, Waldeck had scrupulously avoided employing the terms "religious orders" or "congregations" in the proposal. Instead, he had used the phrases "associations whose members live in common" or "associations composed of Frenchmen and foreigners" to designate the Catholic religious orders. Waldeck preferred to employ these rather vague terms because he did not wish to give the impression that he intended to make the congregations the objects of special repressive legislation.[2] The Associations Commission disapproved of Waldeck's terminology. Consequently, the commission decided to employ the term "religious congregation" in order to make it absolutely clear that the orders came under the purview of the proposed law.[3]

The second change that the commission had introduced into Article 13 was of vastly greater significance than an alteration of terminology. Waldeck-Rousseau had proposed in 1899 that authorization of all types of associations be conferred by a decree of the Council of State, rather than by a legislative act.[4] The commission did not look favorably upon giving the Council of State

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1. L'année politique, 1899, p. 418.

2. Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Session of 13 January 1900. Waldeck defended his views at the commission's request during this session.

3. Ibid., Session of 7 March 1901.

4. L'année politique, 1899, p. 424.

the important prerogative of granting authorization to religious orders. In the commission's session of March 7, 1900, the change from authorization by decree to authorization by law was pushed through by the anticlerical majority.[1] This action altered the fundamental character of the bill and touched off a heated debate in the commission. Some members opposed the concept of legislative authorization on the grounds that Parliament worked too slowly to be effective in questions of such gravity, but the commission failed to restore the original wording when the vote on this question resulted in a tie.[2] Waldeck-Rousseau also attempted to persuade the commission to abandon the requirement of parliamentary authorization. He predicted that the number of requests from sporting societies, literary societies, and gymnastic associations, as well as those from congregations, would result in a burdensome amount of paper work for Parliament.[3] Moreover, Waldeck observed, the necessity of legislative authorization could conceivably work to the advantage of the unauthorized congregations. Demands for authorization would have to be presented to the Chamber of Deputies in the form of bills. If the Chamber refused to pass these bills, the congregations had the constitutional right to present their bills to the Senate after six months had elapsed. "During that period of six months," Waldeck noted, "the unauthorized congregations will have a de facto situation much better than prior to the promulgation of the law. This is simply one more reason for preferring that authorization be in the hands of the Council of State, for if the congregation is not to be authorized, it is the government's prerogative to put a quick end to its illegal situation."[1] Despite Waldeck's intervention on this and on a later occasion,[2] the commission, fearing that the Council of State might prove too lenient with the orders, refused to yield on this question.[3]

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[1] Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Session of 7 March 1901.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., Session of 31 May 1900.

A rapid narrative of the parliamentary debates on the Associations bill will serve to illuminate many of the fundamental issues in French anticlerical politics at the turn of the century. When discussion of Article 13 was opened on the floor of the Chamber of Deputies, Waldeck was obliged to expend most of his energy in an attempt to keep his radical supporters from seizing the bill and making it an instrument of suppression. Radical anticlericals were not confined to the commission; those in the Chamber were to prove quite as vexatious as Trouillot and his cohorts. One of these was young Alexandre Zévaès, whose intransigent opposition to everything connected with Catholicism had won him recognition as the enfant terrible of the Socialist Party. Scarcely had the Associations Bill come before the Chamber than Zévaès offered an amendment (if so mild a term may be employed) to Article 13, proposing that "no religious order may exist in France. All existing orders, authorized and unauthorized, are hereby suppressed."[4] Zévaès attacked the orders by citing the danger of the mortmain, which he termed an "incalculable and prodigious treasure" that ought to be confiscated and placed at the disposal of the state.[5] Another Socialist, M. Victor Renou, condemned the monks' triple vows as unnatural and even antisocial.[6] Catholic members of the Chamber were quick to observe that Socialists who promised to follow the party line were themselves subject to an oath of obedience not unlike the one taken by monks and nuns.[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Session of 7 March 1901.

[2] Ibid., Session of 1 June 1900.

[3] Ibid., Session of 31 May 1900.

[4] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (7 March 1901), 805.

[5] Ibid., p. 806.

[6] Ibid., p. 881.

At this point it was Georges Trouillot who intervened and brought the discussion back to the level of political realities. Trouillot outlined what he termed the "three essentials" of the proposed bill: authorization of every congregation by a law, cessation of teaching activities by every member of an unauthorized congregation, and the introduction of an effective and enforceable means of liquidating the unauthorized congregations' properties.[2] Of these "three essentials," only the last was part of Waldeck's original proposal.

On March 11, Waldeck-Rousseau spoke against the Zévaès amendment and again demonstrated the essentially legalistic and contractual concepts that dominated his anticlerical thinking. Emphasizing first the state's right to protect itself from dangerous associations, Waldeck observed:

> When any religious association is constituted, it is the right of the state to examine the proposed association's statutes and purposes, and to lay down general rules governing its functioning. This idea . . . is the fundamental tenet upon which the Associations Law will be founded.[3]

But, Waldeck continued, the state's role was not limited merely to the exercise of inherent prerogatives. Legally constituted religious orders possessed rights that the government must respect and protect:

> When the state has ascertained the purpose of the congregation and when it has authorized the congregation because the purpose appeared useful, then the state has made with the congregation a contract that may be broken only in good faith. . . . If the

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (11 March 1901), 901.

[2] Ibid., p. 909.

[3] Ibid.

> religious association fulfills the purpose for which it was founded and which caused the state to authorize it in the first place, then the latter may not prudently and justly destroy what it judged useful and in the public interest.[1]

Despite the controversy aroused by the Zévaès amendment, this proposal posed no serious threat to the future of the religious orders. It was an independent gesture made without the support of the parliamentary Socialists, who had caucused March 1 and declined to endorse it.[2] It was chiefly of significance because it served as a sort of sounding-board for ultra-radical opinion and demonstrated the lengths to which certain anticlerical elements were prepared to push their campaign against the Church.

But the most ominous note during the early debates was not struck by Zévaès or other intransigent anticlericals whose views were already well known and taken for granted. Rather, it was a growing breach between the moderate and radical wings of the "republican" groups in the Chamber that was to prove of consequence. This divergence in views and procedures was illustrated in a speech by the Radical-Socialist luminary Camille Pelletan, who attacked moderate Progressists for being too sympathetic to Jesuits while they had been timid in initiating legislation benefitting the working man.[3] The split in republican ranks was destined to widen as the debates progressed, and Waldeck found himself increasingly dependent upon radical support in pushing through his program. The price to be paid for that support would become all too apparent at a later date.

It should be noted here that amendments from the floor had little chance of gaining acceptance. The Socialists had announced as early as

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1. _Annales_, _Chambre_, LXIII (11 March 1901), 909.

2. _Le Temps_, 2 March 1901, p. 1.

3. _Annales_, _Chambre_, LXIII (11 March 1901), 901.

January, 1901 their intention of opposing all amendments to the Associations Commission's version of the bill,[1] and the Radicals later adopted a similar resolution in the interest of speeding the bill's progress.[2] As for the commission itself, the records of its proceedings indicate that opposition amendments found a most unsympathetic reception among the majority of its members.[3]

The knowledge that their proposals would likely get short shrift did not discourage the authors of amendments. Indeed, proposing an amendment became a favorite delaying tactic espoused by the bill's opponents. It was largely because of such a delaying campaign that debate on Article 13 was prolonged from March 7 until March 19. This period witnessed the proposal of amendments exempting certain specific categories of congregations such as charitable orders, orders having missions abroad, and orders composed entirely of women from the requirement of obtaining legislative authorization.[4] Some ten amendments, nearly all of which proposed authorization by executive decree rather than by law, were debated--and rejected--during this time.[5]

In the far-ranging debate touched off by Article 13, neither the legality nor the desirability of some type of governmental authorization for the orders was ever challenged. The fundamental concept dictating this requirement was too widely recognized to be contested. The real crux of the controversy was not the necessity of authorization, but the means whereby it should be accorded. The anxiety felt by many moderates on this score was succinctly

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1. La Libre Parole, 30 January 1901, p. 1.

2. Le Temps, 8 March 1901, p. 2.

3. Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Sessions of 7 March 1900; 14 March 1900; 1 June 1900; 14 June 1900.

4. Annales, Chambre, LXIII (19 March 1901), 1007, 1010-1011, 1015.

5. Ibid., pp. 1010-1015.

expressed by M. Paul Lerolle, a member of the Catholic-oriented Action Libérale group. Lerolle observed that the real purpose of requiring legislative, rather than executive, authorization was to be found in the determination of the anticlerical majority of Parliament to refuse all authorization requests made by the religious orders.[1] This view was shared by other moderates who felt that the congregations would more readily obtain impartial consideration from the Council of State or the cabinet than from a Parliament all too often "agitated by political passions."[2] It was Trouillot rather than Waldeck-Rousseau who acted as sponsor of Article 13, and it was largely because of Trouillot's efforts that it was finally adopted without change or amendment on March 20.[3]

On that same day, Article 14 of the bill came under discussion. It provided that "no one is permitted to direct or to give instruction in an educational foundation of any sort, if he belongs to an unauthorized religious congregation."[4] Article 14 was to prove one of the most controversial provisions of the project since many observers could find neither legal nor logical justification for raising the education issue in a bill designed to regulate liberty of association. The evolution of this article, which like its predecessor was not to be found in Waldeck's version of the bill, is both interesting and revealing.

The provisions of Article 14 were copied almost verbatim from Article 7 of an unsuccessful education bill sponsored by Jules Ferry in 1879.

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (18 March 1901), 975.

[2] Le Temps, 16 March 1901, p. 1.

[3] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (20 March 1901), 1064.

[4] Ibid.

Resurrected by Radical-Socialist Fernand Rabier, this "Article 7" was presented to Parliament as a private bill in June 1900. Though Waldeck chose not to oppose Rabier's proposal, the Premier nonetheless refused to give it his support. Disgruntled by this rebuff, Rabier moved that "Article 7" be referred to the Associations Commission, of which he was a member, and Waldeck-Rousseau agreed to this motion.[1] Once "Article 7" had reached the commission, however, Rabier proved unwilling to abandon his scheme for introducing it as a separate private bill. He requested that a special report be prepared for the proposal, and that special consideration be given it in Parliament.[2] The commission refused to grant Rabier's request during a session that witnessed several heated verbal exchanges. At length it was decided that Waldeck-Rousseau should be summoned before the group to give his views about what should be done with "Article 7."[3]

When he appeared before the commission on June 21, the Premier proposed that "Article 7" be incorporated into the Associations bill. Waldeck felt that restrictions ought to be placed upon the freedom of an unauthorized monk or nun to give instruction. He suggested a formula whereby members of a dissolved congregation should be forbidden to teach unless they could prove that they were no longer affiliated with the congregation in question.[4] When Trouillot noted the difficulty of establishing such proof, Waldeck replied that a simple declaration by the former monks would suffice.[5] Waldeck

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1. _Le Temps_, 14 June 1900, p. 4.
2. Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Session of 14 June 1900.
3. _Ibid_.
4. _Ibid_.
5. _Ibid_.

adamantly insisted that Rabier's proposal be joined to the government's bill, asserting that only in this manner could it gain parliamentary approval. Standing alone, "Article 7" was much weakened, he thought, since it provided neither means of enforcement nor penalties for infringements. The enforcement machinery included in the Associations bill would easily remedy that defect.[1]

After Waldeck's departure, the commission voted to incorporate "Article 7" in the bill. Thereupon Trouillot rose and requested his colleagues to make possible the complete suppression of the privilege of unauthorized monks and nuns to teach. To achieve that end, Waldeck's formula was divided into two sections by Trouillot. The first section, providing that "no member of an unauthorized congregation may direct any sort of educational establishment nor teach there . . ." was approved. The second section of the formula, ". . . unless he can prove that he is no longer affiliated with the congregation . . ." was put to a vote and rejected.[2] By means of this judicious piece of surgery, Article 14 of the bill was given the form in which it was presented to the Chamber of Deputies. Trouillot noted with satisfaction that Article 14 would "make a profound breach in the /Falloux/ Law of 1850."[3]

Education had long been one of the thorniest problems in French politics, and clerical education was an issue always certain to provoke the maximum amount of passion in a parliamentary debate. Since this question loomed so large in 1901, perhaps it would be appropriate at this point to provide a brief background. French public and private education was governed by the "Falloux Law" of 1850. This legislation, anathematized by anticlerical republicans, had broken the educational monopoly long enjoyed by the Napoleonic

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1. Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Session of 14 June 1900.

2. _Ibid._

3. _Ibid._

University be providing that every French citizen who had attained the age of twenty-one might teach school if he were licensed by the national Higher Council of Public Education, composed in part of ecclesiastics. Moreover, thanks to this law, any licensed instituteur was permitted to open a private school upon making a preliminary declaration of his intentions to the mayor of the commune in which he desired to teach.[1] The Falloux Law thus allowed the erection of a system of private education to compete with public instruction. The Church had found this legislation most agreeable, and had quickly come to dominate the field of private instruction in the years following 1850.

Since the Church was thought by many republicans to be traditionally hostile to the Republic, and since the Falloux Law itself had emanated from the Second Empire,[2] it is not surprising that the education given by religious orders--especially the unauthorized ones--should be suspect to many republicans. There was much talk in republican circles about two incompatible societies being produced in France because of the dual system of state schools and Church schools, which, it was held, inculcated conflicting doctrines in the minds of French youth. Governmental concern over the state of public education was not new, nor was it confined to the republican regime. In the 1840's, prior to the enactment of the Falloux Law, the government of Louis Philippe had kept accounts of the Church's open hostility to state education.[3]

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[1] Journal général de l'instruction publique et des cultes, XIX (Samedi, 30 mars 1850), 1.

[2] According to one republican account, Louis Napoleon had bargained for Catholic votes in 1848 by promising to institute clerical education in France after his election. The Comte de Falloux, who drew up the education bill, was himself a former Legitimist and a devout Catholic. None of these facts made the Law of 1850 especially palatable to republicans in 1900. (Arch. Nat. F^{19} 3972, Enseignement, Loi de 1904. Rapport fait au nom de la Commission de l'Enseignement et des Beaux-Arts chargée d'examiner le Projet de loi, adopté par le Sénat sur l'enseignement secondaire privé).

[3] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 3969, Enseignement, 1844-. Liberté de l'enseignement. Rapports du Prefet de Police sur la lutte engagée entre le clergé et l'Université, 1842-1844.

This hostility had become most intense just before 1850, when Catholic leaders condemned the public schools for teaching an anti-Catholic, if not atheistic, creed. To many devout Catholics, education divorced from religious and moral instruction was unthinkable. Out of this ferment had come the Falloux Law, and it was opposition to this legislation that united republicans of such different tendencies as Waldeck-Rousseau and Georges Trouillot in 1901.

Debate on Article 14 produced the most passionate and brilliant oratory of the parliamentary discussions. The bill's opponents lost no time in mounting their attack and spared no invective in their remarks. M. Edouard Aynard, one of the Progressists who had declined to support Waldeck's cabinet, proposed the deletion of Article 14 on the grounds that it constituted a threat not merely to "freedom of education," but to all the liberties guaranteed to French citizens. He deplored the ever increasing strength and intolerance of secularism and warned that

> the day may come when this Republic . . . will fall for having betrayed its *raison d'être*; when people may say that its savior could have been a man generous enough to assure to each citizen liberty in his home, in his work, and in his faith.[1]

It was Comte Albert de Mun, long a leader in liberal Catholic circles, who presented the most effective argument for the opposition when he maintained that the kind of education a child received ought to be decided by his parents. To restrict the parents' freedom of choice in education was to attack the most fundamental of liberties.[2]

If de Mun had expressed the central thesis of the bill's opponents, Léon Bourgeois stated that of its supporters in a speech on March 25. Bourgeois hammered away at the idea that schools operated by the religious orders taught a perverted doctrine inimical to modern ideas and a hatred for laic society that must eventually prove fatal for the Republic:

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[1] *Annales*, *Chambre*, LXIII (20 March 1901), 1057-1058.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 1076.

> What we condemn, what we stigmatize, is intolerance; we do not wish that the youth of this country be taught that because everyone does not belong to an official church or espouse an official philosophy, dissenters are thereby proved lacking in respect for duty, for morality, or for country. Children innocently adopt the perverted ideas of their teachers . . . and when they grow up there will be religious and civil war.[1]

Bourgeois would have had his hearers believe that it was the Church that stubbornly opposed liberalism and progress, but it was not difficult to perceive that a similar charge could be made against the laic state. Alexandre Ribot, a leader of the anti-ministerial Progressists, made this point with great eloquence when he replied to Bourgeois:

> You are still living in the days of Louis-Philippe. You think yourselves innovators, modern men? You are merely plagiarists of worn-out ideas completely discredited today. . . . Gentlemen, you are far too disposed to shut yourselves up in memories of a past that should be finished with forever; you immerse yourselves in empty and meaningless formulae, instead of rallying to the modern idea of freedom, freedom that makes no distinctions in persons, that reserves repressive arms to upholding the rights of the state, but which does not persecute opinion or doctrine. We, on the contrary, believe ourselves to be the true men of progress. . . .[2]

Waldeck-Rousseau summed up the government's viewpoint. Believing the issues involved to have been confused by passion and eloquence, he undertook to clarify the basic question before Parliament and he extended at the same time a pledge of good faith to the religious orders that submitted to French law:

> All of you must be well aware that we are not called upon to decide whether Catholics have a right to rear their children in accordance with the dictates of their consciences, or whether Catholic laymen may open schools and teach. They may do these things and you know it. It is not a question of deciding whether

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (25 March 1901), 1129-1130.

[2] Ibid., p. 1130.

> the Catholic secular clergy may open schools; they may. It is not even a matter of deciding whether the authorized religious orders that obey the law may give instruction; they may. You are simply called upon to do the following: to see to it that education is taken away from those orders that over the centuries have contemplated with equal disdain both monarchies and republics because both of these forms of government synthesized in their minds the state. And you claim that liberty is violated if these orders, traditionally contemptuous of the state, find the state as little disposed today as formerly to place in their hands that most precious privilege, the education of youth! Truly, the government, in requesting your support today, does not ask it simply as a vote of confidence in its policies. It asks from you a vote of confidence in yourselves and above all a vote of fidelity to the republican tradition.[1]

Following Waldeck's remarks, Article 14 was adopted by a vote of 312 to 216.[2] Then, pressed for time, the Chamber accepted both Articles 15 and 16 in the session of March 26. Article 15 required every congregation to furnish a statement of its finances, membership, and property to the prefect of the department in which it was located, and Article 16 simply declared that "every congregation formed without authorization will be declared illegal."[3]

Article 17 of the bill represented an attempt at controlling the disturbing growth of the religious mortmain. A second purpose of the proposal was to terminate the unauthorized congregations' practice of avoiding the payment of taxes on their property. The most common tax-evasion device was for the unauthorized orders to list their property in the name of a private citizen, or occasionally in the name of one of their members. Sometimes property was listed as belonging to a civil or commercial society often composed in part of members of the order.[1] It was, to be sure, the unauthorized orders, such as the Jesuits, who resorted to this subterfuge of "interposed persons." The authorized congregations, by virtue of being legally constituted, had the right to acquire property.[2] It has already been noted that the value of property held by the Jesuit Order reputedly exceeded 48,000,000 francs in 1900.[3] Only 100,000 francs was listed in the name of the order itself.[4] Another order, the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, possessed property valued at almost 86,000,000 francs, but of this amount, only 24,000,000 was listed in the order's name.[5] The means whereby the religious mortmain had been established and the means of its growth were gifts given by pious donors to the congregations. In 1901, the total value of the properties and assets owned by the unauthorized congregations was estimated to be in excess of a billion francs.[6]

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (25 March 1901), 1154ff. It is interesting as well as instructive to peruse the following observations prepared by Waldeck-Rousseau in a rough draft of a speech he intended to deliver in the Chamber of Deputies: "Can an unauthorized congregation teach? It cannot possess a parcel of earth; can it possess rights over the persons of children, over the direction of their minds, which concerns the state much more than property does? . . . (Handwritten notes for speech, without date, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4606).

[2] Ibid., p. 1164.

[3] Ibid., pp. 1186-1187.

To combat the subterfuges practiced by the monastic orders, Article 17 designated three categories of "interposed persons": (1) any individual associated with the congregation, or a corporation composed in part or entirely of members of the congregation and which owned property occupied by the congregation; (2) persons associated with a congregation, who were presented with gifts or bequests; and (3) the proprietor of any property occupied by a congregation after the latter had been declared illegal.[1] The point of this rather confusing legal terminology was simply that all property listed in the name of an "interposed person" as defined by Article 17 would be regarded as belonging to the congregation itself and subject to confiscation should the congregation be declared illegal.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 2002, Papiers de M. Dumay, Directeur des Cultes. Report, "Observations presentées par le Ministre des Cultes sur les conflits élevés par M. le Préfet de Maine-et-Loire, 1880."

[2] Ibid.

[3] See above, p. 28.

[4] Le Temps, 7 January 1901, p. 1.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

Article 18, providing for the dissolution of unauthorized congregations and the liquidation of their assets, was first discussed on March 27. Like much of the bill, this provision had been considerably altered and expanded from Waldeck's original conceptions. The version prepared by Waldeck had provided that in case of their order's dissolution, the members might reclaim any assets that they had forfeited upon taking the vow of poverty concomitant with entry into monastic life. Property donated unconditionally by any person to an order might be reclaimed by the donor during a one-year period of grace. Following this delay, unclaimed assets were to be acquired by the state.[2] This last-named provision, embodying the concept of "property without an owner," was merely an extension of the concept of civil personality. Without the authorization of the government, no congregation had the right to existence or to property. Therefore, if a congregation failed to gain governmental authorization, or if authorization were subsequently withdrawn, the congregation would be considered to pass immediately out of existence and its assets, left without a legal proprietor, would become state property. Article 18 further provided that property confiscated under these conditions should be used for the support of orphans, the aged, and the infirm; it might also be devoted to providing for members of dissolved congregations if the former monks and nuns lacked sufficient personal resources to care for themselves.[1]

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (26 March 1901), 1188.

[2] L'année politique, 1899, p. 424.

Opponents of the Associations Bill regarded the provisions of Article 18 with especial horror. Viewing the proposal as a reflection of the government's desire to lay violent hands upon the orders' wealth--a desire they attributed to an unhappy combination of natural avarice and creeping Socialism--they concentrated their attacks upon two points: that the orders did not in fact possess assets worth a billion francs,[2] and that the government would fail to realize a profit from the seizure of monastic property because it would simultaneously acquire grave liabilities.[3] The most cogent argument along the latter lines was presented by Progressist Deputy Le Herrissée, who maintained that the government, after dissolving unauthorized congregations, could not simply turn their members out into the world to make their way alone. Many were too old; he estimated that 20,000 unauthorized nuns were over fifty years of age. They would have to be cared for. Moreover, the unauthorized congregations provided for some 6,000 invalids; the government would have to assume the responsibilities for their care. The result would be that the state, far from being enriched by its depredations, would soon find itself faced with a mounting deficit. Le Herrissée proposed that Article 18 be referred to the Budget Commission for further study, but this motion was regarded as a delaying tactic by many deputies and it failed.[4]

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (27 March 1901), 2013.

[2] Ibid., pp. 2013-2016.

[3] Ibid., pp. 2026-2027.

[4] Ibid.

Article 18, in a slightly modified form, gained parliamentary approval on March 28, and Articles 19, 20, and 21, containing provisions for implementing the law and abrogating Articles 291-293 of the Penal Code, were rapidly adopted on March 29.[1]

One final issue was raised before the termination of the debates on March 29. A Progressist deputy submitted an amendment forbidding application of the law in French colonies and dependencies.[2] The motivation behind this amendment lay in a widely held belief that missionaries and their orders were propagators of French influence in foreign parts, especially in the Far East.[3] Many politicians, including some of the anticlerical members of the Associations Commission, thought it unwise to disturb the missionary orders in their work, and the question of whether Foreign Minister Delcassé should be heard on this score had been raised on more than one occasion in the commission's deliberations.[4] Delcassé was not summoned, but Waldeck-Rousseau was asked for his views during one of his appearances before the commission. The Premier stated that it was not customary for French laws to apply in the colonies unless special provision for such application were expressly written into the laws. Waldeck preferred to leave the whole matter in abeyance and to let future governments handle the question should it ever become pertinent.[5]

Amid complaints from radical anticlericals that the bill was only a half-measure, and dire predictions from the project's opponents that all religious orders were doomed to certain destruction, the Associations bill was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies on March 29 by a vote of 303-224.[1] Rather fittingly, Georges Trouillot had the final word in the debates. He described the bill as "a work of liberty and progress" and congratulated the assembled deputies on their passage of a measure at once "courageous and generous, and worthy of a government aware of its strength."[2]

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (29 March 1901), 2087.

[2] Ibid., p. 2091. The amendment was withdrawn after Colonial Minister Decrais declared that the law would not apply overseas.

[3] See below, pp. 131-133.

[4] Arch. Nat. Associations Commission 381, Sessions of 7 March 1900 and 25 March 1901.

[5] Ibid., Session of 25 March 1901.

The Senate began discussion of Articles 13-21 on June 18, 1901, and completed its work just four days later. There is no need to dwell upon the debates in the Senate since the same issues and questions were raised there that had already been fought out in the lower house. The Senate made only one change in the bill as it had emerged from the Palais Bourbon: the time limit in which the orders might submit requests for authorization was reduced from six to three months.[3] Amendments from the floor, proposing authorization by executive decree, were defeated.[4] The bill was approved on June 22 by a vote of 169-95.[5] Returned to the Chamber of Deputies on June 28, the Senate version was adopted that same day, and thus the bill passed into law. The new legislation contained few ideas that could be termed innovations. Waldeck-Rousseau and his associates had merely gathered under one heading legal principles that had been recognized for a great many years. Some of the law's provisions might have been considered draconic by many Catholics, but the faithful could derive some consolation from the knowledge that in France there was a tradition that the real effectiveness of any law governing the religious orders was determined not by the concepts it embodied, but by the manner in which it was enforced.

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (29 March 1901), 2094.

[2] Ibid., p. 2096.

[3] France, Annales du sénat, Débats parlementaires, XIX (22 June 1901), 462. (Hereafter cited as Annales, Sénat).

[4] Ibid. (19 June 1901), pp. 310-315.

[5] Ibid. (22 June 1901), p. 466.

Meanwhile, the whole story of the Associations Law's passage and acceptance is not to be found in the annals of Parliament. The controversy about the religious orders, their purpose, their value, and their fate had been taken up by the press, and indeed had invaded the domain of French foreign relations. It is to these not altogether unexpected ramifications of the government's anticlerical policies that attention must now be given.

Chapter III

ANTICLERICAL ISSUES OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT: THE CHURCH UNDER ATTACK

Certain elements in France, particularly the coalition of royalists, anti-Semites, and nationalists created during the Dreyfus Affair, had ranged themselves against the Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet from the day of its formation. Without waiting for the government to formulate any policies or to outline any but the vaguest program of action, the reactionary press had advanced to the attack. The Catholic-oriented _Le correspondant_ hailed Waldeck's cabinet as "a ministry of terror" constructed for the sole purpose of acquitting Dreyfus and punishing the Army.[1] Dreyfus' pardon was denounced as "a betrayal of the nation and the Army." Millerand was attacked as typifying the "revolution"; Gallifet symbolized the "coup d'état."[2]

Edouard Drumont led the van of the ultra-nationalist opposition to the Republican Defense Cabinet. A fanatical anti-Semite, Drumont saw an unholy combination of Socialism, Jewry, and Freemasonry inspiring the new government's program. _La Libre Parole_ took a perverse delight in reporting Dreyfus' pardon, since it regarded this action as proof of editor Drumont's assertion that international Jewry was providing the brains and the money that dictated the cabinet's policies.[1]

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[1] _Le correspondant_, CLXI (23 June 1899), 1231-1233.

[2] _Ibid._, CLXI (23 October 1899), 411.

In the eyes of his opponents, Waldeck-Rousseau could do no right. His government was the recipient of abuse that would have resulted in the imprisonment of its authors in countries where the press laws were less liberal than in republican France. It is at once evident that although much of the criticism heaped upon the Waldeck cabinet might have been immediately inspired by its anticlerical policies, much more of it stemmed from repercussions of the Dreyfus Affair and the cabinet's efforts to restore calm by quelling the nationalist leagues. Events were to demonstrate that the Affair was not resolved when Dreyfus received his pardon.

An attitude of determined intransigence, of opposition to every policy of the government, is apparent in the writings of Edouard Drumont in _La Libre Parole_ throughout the years 1899-1902. It is perhaps even more clearly revealed in a vast number of pamphlets published during this same period. The purpose of most of these polemics was to indicate a direct connection between Jewish money, German influence, and Waldeck's policies. In demonstrating that connection, no insinuation was too calumnious, no phraseology too acrimonious for the authors of these attacks.

Among the most violent tracts was one written by Albert Monniot, a young nationalist journalist and sometime contributor to _La Libre Parole_. Monniot prefaced one of his polemics with a statement to the effect that he would prove that "the Waldeck-Rousseau administration has committed the crime of high treason against France."[2] A true Frenchman, Monniot continued, could not be a Dreyfusard. Prussia's victory in 1871 had not been won by the Prussian schoolmaster, nor was it attributable to Prussia's superior military training, discipline, and material; it was the result of Jewish espionage.[1] Monniot cited the "nearly absolute preponderance of Jewish influence in French politics," the millions of francs raised by German Jews for the purpose of hiring their French brethren to subvert the state, the obvious design of English Jews to promote the British Empire's fortunes by persuading French Jews to use their influence to prevent France's acquisition of colonies.[2] Thus, according to Monniot, international Jewry, promoting the Dreyfusard cause in France, had succeeded in suborning the French government to its ends. Monniot regarded Waldeck's advent to power as the fruit of a wicked collaboration between Joseph Reinach and the government of Germany. The anticlerical issue had been raised by Protestants who "saw in Dreyfusism a means of attacking Catholicism . . ."[3] Such was the dialectic by which Monniot and many other nationalist propagandists interpreted the recent history of France.

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[1] _Le Libre Parole_, 21 September 1899, p. 1.

[2] Albert Monniot, _Les gouvernants contre la nation_ (Paris, 1900), p. 1.

Charles Descotay, also an ultra-nationalist writer, whetted his pen in much the same fashion as Monniot. He accused Waldeck-Rousseau of planning to destroy all liberty, and regarded the proposed Associations bill as a measure specifically designed to attack the Catholic orders. Rather than the Jews, however, this author professed to see revolutionary Socialism directing the government's policies.[4] Godefroy Cavaignac, still another nationalist leader, condemned the cabinet's solution of the Dreyfus Affair as "the destruction of the military establishment," an act that he predicted would inevitably result in "the moral disarmament of France."[1]

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[1] Monniot, Les gouvernants contre la nation, pp. 3-7.

[2] Ibid., pp. 15-20.

[3] Ibid., pp. 28, 45-48.

[4] Charles Descotay, Le cabinet Dreyfus (Paris, 1900), pp. 106-110.

Even the most cursory perusal of these representative offerings of the nationalist and anti-Semitic presses substantiates the view that the real grievance of writers like Monniot and Cavaignac was not what might happen to the religious orders threatened by the Associations Law, but rather with what had already happened to the despised Alfred Dreyfus. The religious issue was simply one more good excuse for berating the cabinet. This attitude was to prevail, despite attempts to camouflage it, throughout most of Waldeck's administration. The anticlerical campaign inaugurated in 1899 was attributed to Jewish, Masonic, and Socialist influence with the cabinet.[2]

The government's decision to punish the Assumptionist Order for its political indiscretions caused an outburst of indignation on the part of the clerical press. Le Gaulois, referring to this incident and to the suspension of several bishops' salaries,[3] asserted that the plight of liberty in France was so desperate, that it was appropriate to speak of religious freedom as "freedom as it exists in Turkey."[4] La Verité Française, mouthpiece of French Ultramontanism, found it intolerable that ecclesiastical personnel should be treated like ordinary civil servants and be subject to the disciplinary procedures used against fonctionnaires. It viewed all government supervision over the clergy with extreme distaste.[1] When Waldeck's desire to obtain the resignations of the archbishops of Aix and of Valence became public knowledge,[2] the newspaper L'Autorité was literally beside itself with rage. This journal, like La Verité Française, was an oracle of reactionary Catholic elements hostile to the principles of the Ralliement. Unable to attack Pope Leo XIII directly, it unleashed its fury against the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla, "the man who has done the most harm to France--the true and conservative France--for the last twenty years."[3] Rampolla had won the bitter enmity of the editor of L'Autorité, Paul de Cassagnac, by scolding him in 1898 for continuing his open opposition to the Pope's policy of peace with the Republic.[4]

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[1] Godefroy Cavaignac, Politique nationale (Paris, n.d.), pp. 21, 28.

[2] Charles Vindex, Le cabinet Waldeck-Millerand (Paris, 1902), pp. 32, 48-49.

[3] See above, pp. 25-27.

[4] Le Gaulois (Paris), 31 January 1900, p. 2.

Catholic opinion was badly divided on several fundamental questions when the twentieth century opened, and nowhere was the deplorable lack of solidarity more apparent--or more detrimental to the Church--than in France. It was unfortunate that at the very time when French Catholics ought to have been presenting a solid front to their anticlerical foes, they were almost entirely preoccupied with internal squabbles that left the Church dangerously weakened and exposed before the attacks of its enemies. The two issues that most seriously disturbed French Catholicism's internal harmony were the Ralliement and "the social question."

Though Pope Leo XIII's attempt to effect a genuine reconciliation between Catholicism and the French Republic was welcomed by the majority of French Catholics, it was not enthusiastically received by all. Ultra-conservatives like Paul de Cassagnac found it impossible to abandon their traditional monarchist or Bonapartist associations, and they became more or less avowed opponents of Leo's conciliatory policies. De Cassagnac quickly assumed the role of spokesman for this small but vociferous group of intransigents, and L'Autorité continued to be the handmaiden of the monarchist parties.[1] Through his writings de Cassagnac proved to be an eloquent and influential foe of the Ralliement and of Cardinal Rampolla, the Pope's able Secretary of State. De Cassagnac did the Church irreparable damage in the eyes of republican France, since for most Frenchmen he personified the traditional association of Ultramontane clericalism with royalism. Moreover, de Cassagnac's activities caused some republican leaders to wonder if the policy of Ralliement were really sincere.[2]

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[1] La Verité Française (Paris), 23 February 1900, p. 1.

[2] See above, p. 27.

[3] L'Autorité (Paris), 24 February 1900, p. 1.

[4] Maurice Hoog, Les conservateurs et la troisième république (Paris, 1910), p. 104.

A more serious issue dividing French Catholics at the turn of the century was the question of what ought to constitute the Church's policy toward social reform. The Church appeared painfully tardy in coming to grips with the social and economic problems spawned by the accelerated pace of industrialization in France, and when at last clergymen did become preoccupied with "the social question," they were profoundly disturbed to discover that Socialism was upon the verge of usurping the Church's traditional role of mediator and arbiter in human affairs.[3] Most Catholic leaders agreed in denouncing Socialism, with its principles of collectivism, international cooperation, and the welfare state as "essentially atheistic, destructive of the family, of patriotism, and of property rights."[4] Having condemned the Socialist approach, however, Catholics found it difficult to agree upon what constituted a "Christian approach" to the social question. Recognizing that concepts of justice and charity formed the basis of the Church's social doctrine, certain writers urged free associations of workers, to be patronized but not controlled by the state, for the purpose of bargaining with their employers.[1] Perhaps Count Albert de Mun best typified the liberal Catholic attitude toward social reform at the turn of the century. De Mun, a former monarchist, was won over to the Ralliement by Pope Leo XIII,[2] and having cast his lot with the Republic, launched himself upon a campaign to abolish working class misery. De Mun's ideals were lofty--he hoped to achieve "a spiritual regeneration" of the proletariat--but his techniques were not well suited to arousing working class enthusiasm. Accepting Pope Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors (which condemned Socialism, among other things) as his platform,[3] de Mun appealed to all men of good will for cooperation. He regarded the workers as confused children, and taught that the privileged classes had certain responsibilities to the unfortunate. De Mun's approach was essentially evangelistic; he worked closely with the clergy, and stressed Christian concepts of cooperation and brotherhood as the basis for all social organization.[4] Though undoubtedly sincere, de Mun never succeeded in arousing much enthusiasm with the "Catholic Circles" that he organized, and his rather patronizing methods assuredly lacked the dynamic appeal that Socialism was making during this same time.[5]

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[1] Abbé Pierre Dabry, Les catholiques républicains (Paris, 1905), p. 61.

[2] Ibid., pp. 61, 76-77.

[3] Ibid., p. 149.

[4] J. Malphettes, L'église et le socialisme (Albi, 1903), p. 13.

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[1] Malphettes, L'église et le socialisme, pp. 9-10.

[2] Dabry, Les catholiques républicains, pp. 180-181.

[3] Comte Albert de Mun, Ma vocation sociale (Paris, 1911), pp. 22, 73.

[4] Ibid., p. 110.

[5] Dabry, Les catholiques républicains, pp. 190-191.

Other leaders in this movement that came to be called Christian Democracy were Jacques Piou, who followed de Mun's essentially paternalistic methods, and Abbés Naudet, Gayraud, and Garnier.[1] The doctrine of Christian Democracy was eventually established upon the rather vague, if broad foundations of "social justice, religion, family, property rights, economic reforms, syndicates, and social legislation."[2]

Abbé Gayraud, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, emerged as one of the most influential spokesmen for Christian Democracy. In 1899 he defined the movement as being neither political nor confessional, conservative nor revolutionary; it was simply "an attempt to reform existing social organization in accordance with the principles taught by Leo XIII."[3] Two years later, having seen the Church steadily lose ground in its attempt to exercise greater influence over the masses, Gayraud noted sorrowfully that the Church's plight—exemplified by the continued success of political anticlericalism—could be explained by the fact that many Frenchmen had concluded that Catholicism was identified with the forces of social and political reaction.[4] Gayraud called upon the Church to regain its popularity by snatching direction of the social reform movement from Socialist interlopers. He attempted to appease conservative opinion by noting that social action was part of the Christian tradition, and "was not endowed with an essentially political or democratic character."[5]

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[1] Dabry, Les catholiques républicains, pp. 218, 274.

[2] Ibid., p. 209.

[3] Abbé Hippolyte Gayraud, Les démocrates chrétiens (Paris, 1899), p. 163.

[4] Abbé Hippolyte Gayraud, La crise de la foi (Paris, 1901), pp. vi-viii.

[5] Ibid., p. 215.

At least one member of the Catholic hierarchy, a certain Bishop Pechenard, was aware of the acuteness of the social question. Mgr. Pechenard admitted that many workers, deceived by the siren song of Socialism, regarded the Catholic Church as a bulwark of the propertied classes and consequently as their own natural enemy. This socialist-inspired view of the Church was entirely erroneous, the bishop asserted, for the Church possessed among its "treasures of evangelical doctrine" a remedy for every problem troubling the modern world. The solution to the social question was to be found in the Christian concepts of justice, charity, and mutual support. Mgr. Pechenard advocated a program very similar to that espoused by Gayraud, de Mun, and their associates: the formation of "Christian Syndicates" that would uphold religious and moral principles while striving to improve workers' social and economic positions. Efforts to ameliorate the misery of the lower classes were to be entirely private manifestations of Christian charity, obviating the need for governmental action to promote reform.[1]

Despite the moderate--not to say innocuous--nature of Christian Democracy's programs, nearly all such attempts to induce the Church to assume the direction of the social reform movement were regarded with great suspicion by most conservative Catholics. Ultimately, as liberal churchmen and laymen continued to agitate for action on the social question, the conservatives began to regard social reform itself as a sort of crypto-Socialist scheme which, if adopted, must result in the abandonment of some of the Church's traditional doctrines governing charity and individual freedom.

Consequently, some writers did indeed interpret the ferment of new ideas as an indication that the Church's doctrinal and spiritual authority was under attack. In the eyes of many conservative observers, the designs of would-be reformers were as suspect as those of professed anticlericals. In attempting to change the Church's traditional position regarding social reform, the reformers laid themselves open to the charge of perverting Catholic doctrine. Change sometimes opened the door to reckless innovation, and the ending of reform's primrose path often lay in revolution.[1] Reform movements in the Church were lumped together under the general term of "Americanism," which summed up all attempts to reduce the powers and prerogatives of the Pope and to modify dogmas dear to the hearts of Ultramontane Catholics.[2]

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[1] Mgr. Pechenard, L'église et la question sociale (Paris, 1903), pp. 4-6, 10-11.

One of the best examples of this extreme suspicion of innovation was an anonymous tract published in 1902. The author advertised his Ultramontane convictions by proclaiming his belief in the Pope's "infallibility and omnipotence," and having thus presented his credentials, he proceeded to dismiss Protestantism, rationalism, politics and revolution as "a mélange of errors." He condemned the Ralliement because it implied acceptance of the French Revolution, and he criticized liberal Catholicism for encouraging believers to desire a national Church more or less independent of Rome. On the other hand, he regarded the anti-Semitic and ultra-nationalist propaganda of Jules Guérin, Edouard Drumont, and Paul Déroulède as both patriotic and of value to Catholicism's cause.[3] This pamphlet was enthusiastically reviewed by Bishop Justin Fèvre, who was moved by it to write a sequel entitled _L'abomination de la désolation_, expanding upon the same ideas and adding his own ringing denunciation of "Americanism."[4]

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[1] B. Guineaudeau, _La grande crise de l'église de France_ (Paris, 1903), pp. 3, 10.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 3.

[3] Anon., _La désolation dans la sanctuaire_ (Paris, 1902), pp. 17-18, 41-42, 56-57.

[4] Mgr. Justin Fèvre, _L'abomination de la désolation_ (Paris, 1902), pp. 25-26.

This digression from the theme of the Associations Law and the religious congregations has not been without purpose. It has seemed desirable to outline briefly the French Church's situation in 1900. It is obvious that the Church's position, though not desperate, was by no means sound. From the Catholic standpoint, it was unfortunate that the Church should have been torn by internal dissension just when the government, after fifteen years of relative religious peace, was about to open a new anticlerical campaign. Small wonder that French Catholics, beset with problems on all sides, should have sometimes reacted violently and hysterically to new pressures generated by the government's anticlerical policies, or that while moderate Catholics were losing both face and heart, the ultra-conservatives were redoubling their attacks upon a persecuting Republic.

The Catholic religious orders were not without defenders and champions in the press. It is sad to relate, however, that with few exceptions the hundreds of writers who arose to the congregations' defense were quite as devoid of imagination, resourcefulness, and conviction as the anticlerical polemicists. One of the few pamphlets to suggest a rational course of action for the congregations to follow was an anonymous tract published just after the promulgation of the Associations Law in July, 1901. Believing that most requests for authorization would be refused by a hostile Parliament, the author proposed that the orders voluntarily disband before October 1 (the expiration date of the three-month grace period for making authorization requests). Only when there were good prospects of receiving authorization, as in the case of the charitable congregations, should it be requested. After disbanding, the former monks and nuns would be free to form associations in accordance with the provisions of the Associations Law. It was essential that the congregations submit no accounts of their membership to the government (as was required by the authorization procedure) because this information would be useful if the authorities decided to initiate discriminatory practices against their erstwhile members.[1] From a purely rational and legalistic point of view, these counsels were sound if decidedly calculating. Yet one essential factor was overlooked or purposely ignored. The religious orders were not autonomous units; they depended upon the Pope for direction, since they were more or less independent of local ecclesiastical authority. To have cut themselves off from Rome, or to have renounced their essentially spiritual and religious functions--in a word, to have become merely independent laic associations--would have been tantamount to denying their very reason for existence, and there is no evidence to indicate that any congregation attempted to implement this course of action.

Perhaps the most practical advice to French Catholics came from another anonymous pamphlet published during this same period. It urged the faithful to undertake political action on every level of national life in order to protect the Church from further depredations at the hands of the state. The author proposed the organization of "Catholic Committees" on the cantonal, departmental, and national levels, but he failed to indicate just who was to provide the impetus and the funds needed to inaugurate the movement for political action.[2]

The purpose of many pamphlets was to praise the religious orders for their services to the nation and to charity. Since most of these tracts are remarkably similar in both style and content, it is not necessary to mention more than a few of them. The religious orders were usually defended on the grounds that their existence was vital to the well-being of the Church and of society. Supporters of the congregations often cited their work in charity,[1] in foreign missions where they spread French influence,[2] and were always careful to stress the fact that monks and nuns did not regard their monasteries and convents as prisons, as anticlerical writers suggested, but as homes. Their vows were taken voluntarily, and could be renounced at will.[3] One of the most cogent arguments presented on behalf of the regular clergy was that forcible dissolution of their religious orders would deprive thousands of French citizens of their chosen vocation. To abolish monastic life was to deny to the individual the "natural right of making of himself whatever he chooses."[4]

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[1] Anon., Conseils aux congrégations non reconnues (Paris, 1901), pp. 2-3.

[2] Anon., Aux catholiques de France (Turcoing, 1901), p. 1.

Another category of polemical tracts was that which undertook the defense of specific orders on the grounds that they made some unique contribution to French society or to civilization. One such congregation was that of the Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, an order that devoted most of its energies to teaching. This order had enjoyed a long tradition of popular education, and its chief appeal was to the masses. It operated normal schools, as well as vocational schools in agriculture and industry, and worked closely with de Mun's Catholic Circles, which attracted many of the order's former pupils.[5] M. Maurice Croisé, who undertook to describe the beneficial achievements of this congregation, was careful to emphasize that the Institut enjoyed a tradition of loyalty and service to France, and had largely divorced itself from political issues.[1]

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[1] Abbé X, Les congrégations religieuses en France (Paris, 1900), pp. 20, 27.

[2] J.-B. Piolet, Nos missions et nos missionaires (Paris, 1904), p. 5.

[3] Père Joseph Burnichon, Derniers jours d'un condamné (Paris, 1902), pp. 4-5.

[4] Ibid., p. 10.

[5] Maurice Croisé, L'Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes (Paris, 1903), pp. 10-16.

The Salesian Order was similarly defended for its record of constructive achievement. This order, like the Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, was devoted largely to the service of the poor. It maintained orphanages and provided vocational instruction for the unprivileged. The order promoted social peace and progress by attempting to animate workers with the spirit of Christianity while it sought to improve their material positions.[2] The Franciscans[3] and the Benedictines[4] also had defenders who proposed to show that these unauthorized congregations were making significant contributions to France through education or missionary work. In conclusion, it may be fairly said that the majority of pamphlets published in support of the religious orders were models of temperate writing. There was little of the violent and provocative phraseology that marred many nationalist and anti-Semitic polemics allegedly published in defense of the Church. It must be admitted, however, that the writings of moderate clericals do not appear to have significantly swayed public opinion in favor of the orders. These works, moreover, appearing just when passions were most excited by the debate upon and passage of the Associations Bill, served to stimulate a flurry of anticlerical pamphlets that demonstrated all too clearly the extent to which radical anticlericals were aroused. It cannot be said that the anticlericals maintained the sense of calm demonstrated by much of the clerical press.

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[1] Croisé, L'Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, p. 21. Another writer noted that the monks of this order had marched with French armies in 1870-1871 and had cared for the wounded on the battlefield. (Abbé X, Les congrégations religieuses, p. 30.)

[2] Comte Maurice Fleury, Les Salésiens, l'oeuvre de Dom Bosco (Paris, 1903), pp. 10-11, 31.

[3] Hilaire de Barenton, Les Franciscains en France (Paris, 1903).

[4] Dom Besse, Les Bénédictins en France (Paris, 1905).

The issue that generated the most anticlerical excitement was that of Catholic education. The explanation for this p~~eh~~henomenon lies in the fact that both clericals and anticlericals had long since admitted that the supreme prize for which they were contending was the inestimable prerogative of shaping the French mind. It was in the field of education that the Catholic Church appeared to enjoy the greatest advantage in its centuries old struggle against the encroachments of the secular state. The fact that clerical education was growing at the expense of public education constituted a source of great anxiety to many republican leaders. Between 1865 and 1898, the percentage of pupils enrolled in church schools had nearly doubled, while the percentage attending public institutions had decreased alarmingly. By the latter date, about forty per cent of all children in secondary schools were receiving clerical education.[1] Such a growth of church-sponsored instruction was intolerable to those Frenchmen who looked upon the congregations as the avant-garde of a Catholic conspiracy against the Republic. It will be recalled that when the question of clerical education had arisen in the Chamber of Deputies in 1901, much of the opposition to the instruction provided by religious orders revolved around the claim that the orders inculcated perverted concepts in conflict with "modern ideas."[2]

Catholic leaders hotly denied the allegation that church-related schools were less than dedicated to molding responsible and patriotic citizens. Abbé Gayraud justified clerical instruction on the grounds that laic education could never give the "moral unity" that anticlericals professed to desire. "If there is in our country an effective agent of moral unity," he wrote, "what could it be, if not Catholicism?" Gayraud voiced fears shared by many Catholics that state schools would promote anti-religious feeling.[1]

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[1] Paul Desachy, La France noire (Paris, 1899), pp. 167-168.

[2] See above, pp. 45-48.

The old Radical leader Henri Brisson expressed one of the greatest trepidations of anticlericals when he wrote that "unless the state recovers its rights over education, modern France will perish through division."[2] Ironically, all efforts to defend clerical education merely resulted in adding to the apprehensions already experienced by anticlericals. A striking illustration of this fact was provided by an article written by the Jesuit Père du Lac in a Catholic periodical. After praising clerical education in general, du Lac proceeded to describe the kind of instruction given in Jesuit schools. According to du Lac, education was carefully supervised and integrated by completely dedicated teachers who strove to develop an intimate bond between themselves and their pupils. Frequent trips home were not permitted to pupils; du Lac termed it "dangerous" to allow students to visit their families more than once a month. Moral instruction was a paramount concern of Jesuit education, and aimed at teaching a boy to "conquer himself, to act against his will because of a superior motive."[3] The lofty ideals in such a philosophy of education were immediately apparent. Needless to say, it was these very ideals that caused most alarm among the advocates of a state monopoly over instruction. Many anticlericals feared that the loyalties of a Jesuit-educated boy might lie more with the Society of Jesus than with the Republic.[1]

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[1] Abbé Hippolyte Gayraud, La république et la paix religieuse (Paris, 1900), pp. 224-226.

[2] Henri Brisson, La congrégation: opinions et discours 1871-1901 (Paris, 1902), p. 39.

[3] Le correspondant, CLXVI (10 January 1901), 33-34, 40.

The Dreyfus Affair had appeared to demonstrate, among other things, that clerical influence was growing in the Army. To this disturbing development was attributed the existence of anti-republican sentiment in the ranks of the higher officers. In the light of these facts, anticlericals viewed with alarm a report that clerical schools prepared about one-fourth of the young men entering the Ecole Polytechnique and approximately one-third of those entering St. Cyr.[2]

The question of how the state system of education might best deal with clerical competition inspired a variety of proposed solutions, which can be divided into two general categories. Moderate republicans suggested that the surest means of overcoming the attractiveness of clerical education was to overhaul and improve public instruction and thereby bring it more in line with modern educational ideas. The second solution, advocated by a growing number of radical anticlericals, was simply to remove the clerical competition by closing schools operated by the religious orders, thereby giving the state a virtual monopoly over instruction.

Alexandre Ribot, a leader of the Progressists opposing Waldeck and the Associations Law, exemplified the views of moderate republicans on the education issue. Though he had spoken against Article 14 during the parliamentary debates,[3] Ribot publicly conceded that the Falloux Law failed to give the state adequate control over clerical education.[1] But it was not the mere existence of church schools that constituted a threat to laic education. The public schools' greatest enemy was not clerical competition but the curriculum imposed upon them by the state. This curriculum represented an effort to effect a compromise between "classical" and "modern" educational ideas, the result of which was that students emerged ill-prepared from the public schools.[2] The solution to this problem was simply to upgrade teaching standards in state-supported schools and to inaugurate a more dynamic, practical curriculum that would enable public schools to compete favorably with those run by the religious orders.[3] These basic reforms accomplished, no one need apprehend the effects of clerical competition; indeed, church schools should be allowed to exist as a source of stimulation to continued progress in laic education.[4]

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[1] Léon Bourgeois voiced similar fears in his speech in the Chamber of Deputies on March 25, 1901. (See above, p. 47.)

[2] Desachy, La France noire, p. 169. L'Ecole Polytechnique trained the Army Engineers and artillery officers; St. Cyr trained cavalry officers and produced the bulk of the General Staff.

[3] Annales, Chambre, LXIII (March 25, 1901), 1129-1130.

Léon Bourgeois, long an outspoken critic of church-related education, had interested himself in pedagogical questions for several years prior to 1901. Bourgeois eventually concluded that "the spirit in which subjects are taught is more important than the material taught."[5] He did not categorically denounce the instruction provided by Catholic schools, nor did he subscribe to that cherished tenet of laic republicanism, the creation of a state monopoly over education. He proposed that education be carried on by private associations, aided by state funds,[1] merely stipulating that all instruction should be oriented toward "subjects useful in molding a modern mind."[2]

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[1] Alexandre Ribot, La réforme de l'enseignement secondaire (Paris, 1900), p. 154.

[2] Ibid., p. 52.

[3] Ibid., pp. 54, 67.

[4] Ibid., p. 155.

[5] Léon Bourgeois, L'éducation de la démocratie française (Paris, 1897), p. 73.

Georges Leygues, Waldeck's Minister of Public Instruction, held views similar to those of Bourgeois. Leygues emphasized the liberal philosophy that a democracy must be open to all sorts of ideas and that party spirit, whether laic or clerical, should not be allowed to cloud this fundamental concept. Like Ribot and Bourgeois, Leygues was not greatly troubled by the existence of church schools, but confessed that his real concern stemmed from the direction that French public education was taking. He believed that an attempt must be made toward better gearing instruction to "the needs of modern society . . . and preparing youths for the economic struggle by directing their minds toward action."[3] Leygues envisaged a curriculum that would give a greater role to the natural and physical sciences and to modern languages. The conclusion to be drawn from Leygues' proposals was that the traditional concept of "classical education" ought to be revised.[4]

Other writers attacked the problem of formulating a philosophy of laic education with more enthusiasm than logic. M. Camille Léger considered the supreme goal of such instruction to be "imparting ideals of truth, justice, and solidarity" to French youth.[5] Workers' children in particular must be indoctrinated with "the moral idea of justice" and all youth ought ideally to be endowed with "a certain conception of patriotism."[1] It should be noted that Catholics claimed that their schools were already doing just these things. Another writer conceived of the laic school as "the daughter of the Declaration of the Rights of Man."[2] Though honestly and avidly advanced, ideals like these were subject to a variety of interpretations and they were seldom accompanied by any practical plan of implementation.

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[1] Bourgeois, L'éducation de la démocratie française, pp. 181-182.

[2] Ibid., pp. 75-77.

[3] Georges J.-C. Leygues, L'école et la vie (Paris, 1903), pp. i-iv.

[4] Ibid., pp. 211, 233.

[5] Camille Léger, L'éducation laïque (Paris, 1902), p. 35.

Not all the writers on the education question demonstrated the cool objectivity of Ribot, Bourgeois, and Leygues. For many polemicists, the issue was a convenient springboard for launching into a violent denunciation of everything connected with the Catholic Church. Victor Charbonnel asserted that the Church should be denied the privilege of teaching because unable to emancipate itself from its medieval obscurantism, the Church could only employ education as a means of stifling free enquiry.[3] Georges Clemenceau shared this hostile view of clerical education. Writing in 1902, this fiercest of all "priest eaters" advocated destroying all religious orders, regardless of their legal status, since the congregations were "destructive of the individual freedom basic to all liberty."[4] Clemenceau demolished the argument that parents enjoyed a fundamental right of determining the nature of their children's education. He contended that the child himself had a superior "right to future liberty," a right that was negated if his parents chose to enroll him in a monastic school. Clemenceau regarded clerical education as destructive of a child's right "to life, to physical evolution, and to psychological evolution." He believed that the greatest fault of clerical instruction was its attempt to substitute faith and acceptance of authority for free enquiry and scientific investigation. "Open wide the avenues of the mind," he wrote; "let there be no more closed doors. Let there be light, free light; let there be conflict, free conflict between error and truth." Clemenceau remained confident that in this free exchange of ideas, truth would prevail over error without the necessity of theological or ecclesiastical persuasion to tip the balance of judgment.[1]

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[1] Léger, L'éducation laique, pp. 126-127, 142.

[2] Revue politique et parlementaire, XXIX (August 1901), 264.

[3] Victor Charbonnel, L'église et la république (Paris, 1900), pp. 14, 17.

[4] Georges Clemenceau, L'église, la république (Paris, 1903), p. 83.

It had long been assumed that Catholic charity, largely administered by religious orders that operated orphanages, workhouses, and hospitals, and Catholic foreign missions, likewise subject to monastic direction, would scarcely be subjected to anticlerical criticism or attack. The illusion of the invulnerability of these supreme examples of good works was soon shattered, for both charities and missions were viewed most unfavorably by many anticlerical writers. R. Bompard maintained that hospitals run by religious orders were merely "centers for clerical influence and propaganda," where more attention was devoted to the soul's welfare than to the body's ills.[2] Bompard, though critical of religious charity, was nonetheless prepared to admit that it could serve a useful purpose until the state should be prepared to offer an adequate system of public welfare.[3]

The chief justification that Catholic writers offered for the existence of missionary orders was the argument that dedicated missionaries had been

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1. Clemenceau, L'église, la république, pp. 85-86, 88-89.

2. R. Bompard, Les congrégations et l'assistence (Paris, 1902), pp. 9-10.

3. Ibid., p. 36.

instrumental in creating the French Empire, and that they were still engaged in spreading French language, culture, and political influence in backward areas of the world. It was frequently implied that to curtail or to embarrass the activities of missionary orders would do irreparable damage to the continued success of France's establishing colonies and protectorates.[1] Though a good many supposedly anticlerical politicians conceded that Catholic missionaries had rendered valuable services to the cause of empire, their orders could no more escape the shafts of anticlerical polemicists than could the charitable orders. One of the gravest charges lodged against the missions was that of corruption. An anonymous pamphleteer asserted that in Indo-China, the missionary orders' proselytizing "accomodated itself as readily to traffic in human flesh as the contemplative mysticism of La Grande Chartreuse does to commerce in alcohol."[2] The missionaries were often prideful and troublesome. Considering themselves superior to Asians, they frequently refused to respect native customs or to obey local laws. French administrators were distracted from their official duties by the necessity of protecting missionaries from the consequences of their own indiscretions. The missions were generally supported almost entirely by their exploitation of native labor in agricultural or industrial enterprises, a fact scarcely conducive to increasing French popularity with Asians.[3] Many natives feigned conversion to Christianity because they knew that native Christians enjoyed numerous opportunities for profiting from contacts with French administrators. These

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1. Piolet, Nos missions et nos missionaires, p. 5.

2. Anon., Les missions en Indo-Chine (Paris, 1904), p. 8.

3. Ibid., pp. 11-15.

"converts" could steal and bootleg with impunity.[1] As for the educational and cultural activities of the missions, their schools were primarily devoted to training only the brightest pupils for ecclesiastical careers. These pupils were taught Latin, not French. The great mass of mission pupils received little more than an elementary vocational training that enabled them to work for the missions.[2]

Clemenceau, having whetted his pen by exposing the perils of clerical education, naturally contributed to the general indictment of the Catholic missions. He alleged that the Jesuit mission in Shanghai operated a brothel and a cigarette factory, and found both enterprises extremely profitable.[3] When the Jesuits denied these charges, Clemenceau returned to the attack. He published a statement attributed to Père Tournade, Procurator of the Jesuit mission in Shanghai, admitting that since details of supervision in many matters were entrusted to Chinese superintendants, it was possible for the Jesuits to be deceived about certain things.[4]

Even a quick reading of the many pamphlets and articles inspired by the formulation and passage of the Associations Law reveals that a good number of anticlericals wanted the government to undertake more than a simple surveillance over the religious orders. Many publications demonstrated anti-religious sentiments that were not confined to the religious orders, but were directed against the Catholic Church itself. A portion of anticlerical opinion could be satisfied only by a complete separation of church and state, or by the total suppression of Catholicism. It was the opinion of Victor Charbonnel that a sincere Catholic or clerical (to him the terms were synonymous) could never be devoted to the Republic because the Church had traditionally represented the very antithesis of all the Republic stood for. The Church symbolized divine right monarchy while the Republic was based upon popular sovereignty. The Church represented the enslavement of the human mind, taught acceptance of human fate, and ignored the great issue of social amelioration. The Republic symbolized free enquiry, encouraged and rewarded individual ambition, and undertook to stimulate social progress. The ends pursued by the Republic were so diametrically opposed to those of the Church that they could never be successfully reconciled in French society.[1] In another pamphlet, Charbonnel advocated "separation of the Church and the family" as a necessary prelude to a separation of church and state. Anticlericals who were impatient with the present slow advance toward separation ought to work for the secularization of society by first secularizing their private domains. They must abandon the sacraments, refuse to tithe, indoctrinate wives and children against religious superstitions. Charbonnel regarded superstitious dread of the unknown as the Church's chief means of asserting its authority over men. He maintained that the organization of "Freethought Societies" for adults and the inauguration of completely secular education at the family level were the only effective means of combatting clericalism.[2]

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[1] Anon., Les missions en Indo-Chine, pp. 26-30.

[2] Ibid., pp. 39-41.

[3] Le Bloc (Paris), 24 February 1901, p. 80.

[4] Ibid., 24 March 1901, pp. 134-138.

Somewhat later, Ulysse Froment expressed the attitude of radical anticlericals toward the Church when he wrote that it was inherently opposed to "modern ideas." Stripped of its superstitious trappings and ceremonies, the Church was virtually bereft of its appeal. It was "like an old woman who puts on her best clothes to die in. Why do we wish the total annihilation of the Catholic religion?" Froment asked. "Because religion is the fiercest enemy of democracy."[1] Still another contemporary observer, confident that the Church was already in an advanced and irreversible state of decay, optimistically urged that no radical anti-religious measures be inaugurated. Rather, existing anticlerical legislation should be enforced, and the Church would die a quiet death within a few years.[2]

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[1] Charbonnel, L'église et la république, pp. 11-27.

[2] Victor Charbonnel, Séparation de l'église et de la famille (Paris, 1900), p. 1.

From this relatively brief treatment of the vast amount of polemical literature inspired by the formulation of the Associations Law, three conclusions, derived from three general ideas expressed in these writings, seem in order. First, it is clear that French Catholics were so disunited at the turn of the century that they were unable to resolve their differences even when menaced by resurgent anticlericalism. It is not an oversimplification to view the line of demarcation separating Catholics as one drawn between liberalism and conservatism. This spiritual and ideological division can be seen in the attitude certain Catholics adopted toward critical issues such as domestic politics, the Ralliement, and Christian Democracy. The split in Catholic thought was fundamental and of great significance for the future of the Church in France. Liberal Catholics who attempted to work within a republican framework for the purpose of mitigating the most pernicious effects of the new anticlericalism, who accepted the Associations Law in the hope of softening its more draconic provisions, and who generally lent their names and influence to the cause of the Ralliement, were to find themselves discouraged and discredited when their efforts failed to produce striking success. When the liberals' failures became obvious, Catholic conservatives, who had already come to view the history of the Third Republic as a process of encroachment by the secular state upon the traditional prerogatives of the Church, seized the initiative in undertaking Catholicism's defense. They were determined neither to yield nor to compromise, and so the battle lines were drawn by July, 1901. The conservatives' intransigence was to be sure based partly upon a self-righteous assurance that recent events had vindicated their long-established convictions. But it rested too upon well-founded apprehensions that unless Catholics did indeed resist further state encroachments in such vital areas as education and charity, the Church must soon find itself dispossessed of its remaining strongholds of influence over French society and French thought. Believing further delay to be fatal, the conservatives leaped into the fray with such allies as were at hand. It was these dubious allies who would ultimately do the most damage to the Catholic cause, for with scarcely an exception they were recruited from elements hostile not merely to Waldeck-Rousseau's cabinet, but to the Republic itself. In this way the conservative Catholics compounded the most serious error of which they had been guilty since the establishment of the Republic. When they welcomed the support offered by the royalists, ultra-nationalists, and anti-Semites, the Catholic conservatives succeeded only in associating their names and the Church they professed to defend with a reactionary movement doomed to ultimate failure. And because they and their associates were to grow increasingly vociferous in denouncing the government's policies, anticlericals would find it easy to tar the whole Church with the brush of reaction. The popular mind finally confused Catholicism with clericalism, nationalism, anti-Semitism, and royalism. The result was that eventually radical anticlericals were able to denounce the Church and religion on the grounds that in so doing they were defending the Republic from attack by sinister and superstitious forces.

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[1] Ulysse Froment, C'est la chute finale (Bourg, 1904), pp. 3, 10.

[2] Jacquemont du Donjon, La séparation de l'église et de l'état (Paris, 1901), p. 14.

The second conclusion to be drawn grows organically out of the first. It is evident that the real issue debated in the press was not the Associations Law, nor was it the fate of the religious orders. These two questions merely formed the surface aspect of a much deeper issue that has run like a continuous thread through much of history. Quite simply it was a matter of determining the proper role of religion in the secular state. Clericals maintained that the Church's influence and range of action must not be delimited. Religion (in this instance, Catholicism) was man's most abiding interest; it provided what certainty there was in the universe, and it alone could guarantee salvation. Consequently, religion must never be regarded as merely one among many human interests. It must dominate all other activities; it must permeate the very fabric of human society and be incorporated into the warp and woof of life itself: the family, the school, and the state. If this attitude can be understood, the alarm with which clericals viewed the possible ramifications of the Associations Law is easily appreciated, and it is not difficult to see why they felt justified in combatting anticlericalism with whatever weapons came to hand. Bishop Justin Fèvre, in his tract _L'abomination de la désolation_, expressed the sense of desperation afflicting conservatives at the turn of the century. He wrote regarding the Associations Law: "All effacement, all inertia, all complicity in the face of anti-Christian laws is more than a mistake, it is a crime. . . . The duty of the present time, more than ever before, is doctrinal intransigence, moral ardor, combat for God and for Country."[1]

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[1] Fèvre, _L'abomination de la désolation_, p. 32.

The final conclusion to be drawn is simply that the men who directed the French anticlerical movement were quite unable to comprehend the position adopted by Mgr. Fèvre and others who shared his convictions. Priding themselves upon their upbringing in the "scientific" tradition of the nineteenth century, they looked upon most religious belief as superstition, and they regarded the Catholic Church as the very embodiment of medieval obscurantism. When they thought of the Church, it was usually in stereotyped terms of the Inquisition's repression of independent spirits and the assertions of the Syllabus of Errors. Most of them were probably sincere in their belief that enlightenment and progress would be promoted by reducing the political and social influence of the Church. It was doubtless comforting and reassuring to see themselves ranged on the side of modernism and freethought, whatever those terms might mean to the individual anticlerical. And it must have been equally encouraging to realize that the flood-tide of history seemed to be running strongly in their direction.

Having drawn conclusions, perhaps it is permissible to base upon them a projection, full of ominous implications for the French Church. Between the clerical and anticlerical forces opposed to each other in 1901, there was little ground for compromise. By 1901, the products of the pamphlet press indicate that control appeared to be slipping from the moderates to the radicals in both camps. Initiative passed from de Mun and Gayraud to de Cassagnac and Veuillot; from Waldeck-Rousseau to Trouillot and Clemenceau. In the coming conflict, one side or the other must triumph; neither side was willing to endure longer the tenuous equilibrium that had been acceptable in the past. The fact that the Associations bill had passed easily through Parliament doubtless gave all clericals food for thought. The real test of strength still lay ahead in 1901, but if the preliminary skirmishing in Parliament and the press indicated anything, it was that the forces of anticlericalism enjoyed a preponderance of strength.

Chapter IV

ENFORCEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATIONS LAW BY WALDECK-ROUSSEAU

JULY 1901 TO APRIL 1902

The promulgation of the Associations Law on July 1, 1901 did not terminate the controversy that had raged uninterruptedly since Waldeck-Rousseau's advent to power in 1899. To be sure, the parliamentary adjournment closed the chief arena for wrangling, but the press provided its own variations on the anticlerical theme, so the issue smoldered throughout the summer. All told, however, the three-month interval during which illegal religious orders might apply for authorization was generally calm. This relative tranquility might be interpreted as stemming from popular approval of the Republican Defense Cabinet's particular brand of anticlericalism, and doubtless Waldeck and his colleagues derived some comfort from this view. It is probable, however, that the season of calm was equally related to the lassitude that gripped France during the great _vacances_ of the summer. Whatever its origin, the _détente_ was welcome to combattants wearied by the bitter campaign just waged in the Palais Bourbon.

A few words will suffice to indicate the relative positions occupied by the press organs of the nationalists, moderates, and radicals as the three-month waiting period opened in July. The nationalist press, typified by _La Libre Parole_, made the charge--by this time neither novel nor newsworthy--

that the government of France was subservient to moneyed Jewish and Masonic interests. The moderate and semi-official Le Temps continued to evidence more concern over international Socialism's influence in the councils of the government than alarm for the religious orders' plight, and urged the formation of a Radical-Progressist bloc which would free the government from further dependence upon Socialist support.[1] Determined anticlericals like Georges Clemenceau insisted that Waldeck-Rousseau had deceived public opinion by pushing a feeble measure through Parliament: though the Associations Law presented a stern façade to the congregations, it lacked fangs and claws and in reality camouflaged an interest in maintaining most of the religious orders intact.[2] These various reactions, drawn from sharply contrasting sources, display a remarkable unanimity in their lack of enthusiasm for the anticlerical policy that had produced the Associations Law.

Though it is fairly easy to gauge the attitudes of journalists, it is more difficult to determine the views of Jacques Bonhomme--if indeed the average French citizen had a well-defined opinion about anticlericalism and the law. The absence of demonstrations and mass protests leads to the cautious conclusion that if the public manifested little positive enthusiasm, neither did it indicate that it was seriously disturbed by what the government had accomplished. Waldeck apparently had these facts in mind when he proceeded to enforce his law with moderation and caution.

Article 18 of the Associations Law provided that the religious orders should enjoy a three-month period of grace during which they must decide whether or not to request authorization. It was therefore assumed that most congregations would make their intentions known prior to October 3. That they did so rather more slowly than anticipated was due to a peculiarity of French legislative and administrative procedure. Article 20 of the new law required the preparation of an administrative decree[1] for the purpose of establishing precise rules for requesting legislative authorization. Many congregations delayed taking any action until the provisions of the administrative decree should be published. This general reticence only served to stimulate speculation about which orders would make application, however, and considerable confusion was generated by the circulation of rumors and false reports.

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[1] Le Temps, 27 July 1901, p. 1.

[2] Le Bloc, 7 July 1901, p. 483.

Le Temps unofficially polled some of the more important congregations on July 2 and published its findings the following day. The Jesuits, long regarded by anticlericals as the chief instigators of anti-republican activity, and who all informed sources agreed had not the slightest hope of being authorized, said merely that they would adopt a watchful policy and would obey the instructions of the Pope.[2] The Eudists, Marists, Carmelites, and Benedictines all reported that they were resolved to await further developments indicative of the government's temper before coming to any decision. The Dominicans, on the other hand, unhesitatingly stated that they would request, and expected to receive, legislative approval. A spokesman for the order observed that Dominicans "had never entered politics, never opposed the government, . . . and we fear neither state control nor state supervision."[1] Le Temps reported on July 10 that "a certain number of men's and women's congregations" had already prepared authorization requests.[2] La Libre Parole energetically denied this report, claiming that such rumors were fostered by the government in order to create confusion among the monastic orders and to destroy their solidarity. It would be foolish, Drumont wrote, for any order to consider requesting authorization before the government's final instructions were made known.[3]

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[1] An administrative decree was customarily issued in the name of the cabinet but it was prepared by a special committee under the supervision of the Council of State. Such a decree possessed a legislative, as well as a purely administrative, nature. In addition to specifying the means of implementing and enforcing the law, it sometimes served the purpose of completing the law by filling in any gaps left by the legislature. (Sharp, Government of the French Republic, p. 311.)

[2] Le Temps, 3 July 1901, p. 2.

In view of the number of groundless rumors and counter-rumors that circulated throughout July and early August, it is fruitless to narrate a day by day account of reports concerning the congregations' intentions. It will merely be observed that on August 17, when the administrative decree was finally promulgated, most orders' intentions were still shrouded in mystery. The Dominicans' avowal of their determination to seek authorization, regardless of the conditions imposed upon them, was an exceptional case.

Following established procedure, Waldeck-Rousseau had entrusted the Council of State with the duty of preparing the administrative decree.[4] A parliamentary committee that included Radical Deputies Sarrien and Trouillot, and Radical Senators Combes and Vallé was established to aid the Council in its deliberations. The committee's participation was criticized by La Libre Parole,

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1. Le Temps, 3 July 1901, p. 2.

2. Ibid., 10 July 1901, p. 1.

3. La Libre Parole, 26 July 1901, p. 1.

4. The Council of State was admirably suited to such work. Composed of administrative experts trained in law, finance, and constitutional government, its function was to ascertain that new laws did not conflict with existing legislation, and to plug any holes that Parliament might have overlooked in the heat of debate. (Sharp, Government of the French Republic, pp. 104, 307-311.)

which asserted that in view of its membership, the committee must have been chosen for the purpose of "watching the Councillors, and exciting their zeal whenever necessary."[1] The selection of such committees accorded with established procedure, however, and the presence of the four Radical Party luminaries was readily explained by the positions they had held on the parliamentary commissions entrusted with studying the Associations bill. Moreover, these legislators possessed merely consultative powers; they exercised no vote in the Council's proceedings.[2]

The Council of State deliberated in secret throughout July, and though it is difficult to determine to what degree Waldeck-Rousseau interested himself in its proceedings, it is certain that the Premier was not left in ignorance of the Council's work. On several occasions, at the councillors' behest, Waldeck undertook to clarify the intent of certain provisions of the law.[3] The evidence indicates that the Premier remained faithful to the conceptions he had expounded in his speeches during the parliamentary debates. In some notes jotted down when the administrative decree was being prepared, he observed that the Associations Law regarded the orders from the viewpoint of their public utility; that is, in terms of their contributions to charity, hospital work, or propagating French influence abroad. In regard to the latter, Waldeck noted that he had refused Delcassé's request for according special privileges and exemptions to orders teaching overseas. The reason for his refusal was that the law would not normally apply in French colonies.[1] In the existing correspondence between Waldeck and the Council of State there is no evidence that Waldeck-Rousseau attempted at this time to influence the Council to stiffen or to soften the provisions of the law by means of the administrative decree.

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[1] La Libre Parole, 1 July 1901, p. 1.

[2] Sharp, Government of the French Republic, p. 308.

[3] Note from the Office of the Vice-president of the Council of State to Waldeck-Rousseau, 18 June 1901, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4611.

The results of the Council's deliberations were made public on August 17. The significant sections of the decree dealt primarily with authorization procedures. It provided that requests for legislative authorization, accompanied by complete accounts of the congregations' membership and properties, together with their organic laws, should be sent to the Ministry of the Interior.[2] Moreover, each order seeking authorization would be obliged to declare that it recognized the jurisdiction of a bishop over its affairs. The bishop in turn was to append to the order's deposition a declaration that he accepted the order under his jurisdiction.[3] The Minister of the Interior would solicit from municipal councils and prefects opinions as to whether or not local congregations should be authorized,[1] and then he would prepare and "submit to the legislature bills (projets de loi) granting or refusing authorization."[2]

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[1] Handwritten, undated note of Waldeck-Rousseau (probably late June or early July, 1901), in ibid.

[2] Interestingly enough, it was the Council of State that pointed out to Waldeck the desirability of having the congregations provide lists of membership, property, and statutes. (Note from the Office of the Vice-president of the Council of State to Waldeck-Rousseau, 18 June 1901 , in ibid.)

[3] The reasoning behind this point was not entirely clear. Waldeck observed that the government did not intend to force bishops to accept congregations under their jurisdiction, but later he noted that "once authorization is accorded, there is an obligation upon the bishop to exercise his authority." Just what the alternatives were if the bishop refused to be accountable for a congregation was not stated, but the logical inference is that such action would constitute a sort of vote of "no confidence" by the bishop, and would jeopardize if not destroy the congregation's chance for authorization. (Note of Waldeck-Rousseau, probably early July 1901, in ibid.)

Publication of the administrative decree excited criticism from the cabinet's adversaries. Le Gaulois, royalist in sympathies, regarded the provisions placing congregations under episcopal supervision as a usurpation of papal authority, since traditionally the Catholic regular clergy in every country obeyed orders emanating directly from Rome. The decree was denounced as an "aggravation" of the Associations Law.[3] La Libre Parole termed the decree's provisions "a most audacious attack upon the rights of the Church," and printed a letter allegedly from Cardinal Gotti, Roman Prefect of the Congregations of Bishops and Regular Clergy, condemning the work of the Council of State.[4] Le Figaro more moderately observed that the decree would increase the difficulties attendant upon forming new orders,[5] while Le Temps waxed indignant at the "abdication of legislative power" which allowed the Council of State, a non-representative body, in effect to change or add to the scope of a law.[6]

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[1] In Waldeck's view, the opinions of the municipal councils and prefects would constitute a gauge of local opinion, but would be regarded as merely advisory, having the effect neither of veto nor vote of confidence. The final decision about authorization would always rest with Parliament. (Note of Waldeck-Rousseau, probably late June or early July, 1901, in ibid.)

[2] Annuaire de législation française (Paris, 1902), pp. 100-101.

[3] Le Gaulois, 13 August 1901, p. 2.

[4] La Libre Parole, 18 August 1901, p. 1.

[5] Le Figaro (Paris), 12 August 1901, p. 3. It should be noted that both Le Figaro and Le Gaulois obviously knew the terms of the decree nearly a week before its official publication.

[6] Le Temps, 18 August 1901, p. 1.

Anticlericals were not entirely pleased with the provisions of the decree. Clemenceau saw in it an unwelcome increase in the powers of the bishops, who, he wrote, "now dream of commanding the united forces of the whole clerical army." He observed that "it would be indeed odd if the Waldeck-Rousseau Law should have no other effect than that of increasing the number of authorized congregations."[1] A writer for the newspaper Le Radical made the interesting observation that submission of the regular clergy to the bishops would place the congregations directly under the concordatory clergy. If the state should ever abrogate the Concordat (and thereby fulfill a long-cherished project of the Radical Party) the government would lose every measure of control over the orders.[2]

Waldeck-Rousseau was quite aware of this problem, and he made provision for dealing with it. The Council of State had debated whether the monastic orders properly belonged under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Cults. The Council had felt that the Ministry of Cults was the logical agency to exercise ultimate jurisdiction. Waldeck emphatically rejected this view. He observed that "the Law of July 1, 1901 was not intended to recognize a regular clergy" (in addition to a secular clergy). Only the Ministry of the Interior, which could utilize the police power, possessed the requisite means of surveillance and enforcement required for dealing with the orders. But Waldeck foresaw no real difficulty since it was traditional that the Minister of the Interior also served as Minister of Cults. In the unlikely event that the ministries should be separated, Waldeck explicitly stated that the congregations ought to remain under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior: "The congregations are, sui generis, associations that necessitate a special supervision and surveillance" and the Ministry of the Interior was best equipped to provide it. Waldeck's system negated any dangers attendant upon abrogation of the Concordat, for even though the Ministry of Cults might cease to exist, the Ministry of the Interior would continue to supervise the congregations.[1]

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[1] Le Bloc, 18 August 1901, p. 576.

[2] Reprinted in ibid., 25 August 1901, p. 593.

Though it clouded the horizon of public opinion, the administrative decree helped to crystallize the decisions of the unauthorized orders. Those which had adopted a temporizing policy had now to decide which of three unpleasant alternatives they would choose. They could request authorization, or disband and allow their members to return to the ranks of the secular clergy, or keep the congregation intact by removing bodily from France to a foreign country. The Vatican proffered little advice as to which line of action the orders should pursue. A letter from Pope Leo XIII to the superiors of the congregations registered a mild protest against the state's encroachments upon ecclesiastical prerogatives and merely enjoined the monks and nuns to

> imitate your saints, who have traveled paths as hard as yours, and keep a firm and dignified attitude, without anger; triumph over evil with good. You have the Pope and the whole Church with you. Pray with confidence and remember Christ's words: "I have conquered the world."[2]

With this example of moderation, Leo prepared the way for Catholic acceptance of the Associations Law. He chose to follow the only course of action open to a pontiff who had made reconciliation with France his chief policy for nearly twenty years. Defiance and resistance, coming at this late date, would merely have fanned the fires of French anticlericalism. In Catholic France there was a dawning awareness in all but the most intransigent quarters that neither the Pope nor any other external agency could do much on behalf of the religious orders. The days of papal supremacy had perished with the Middle Ages; no longer were interdict and excommunication formidable weapons capable of bringing secular powers to their knees. Most Frenchmen, nourished on ideas drawn from the eighteenth century Enlightenment and nineteenth century science, would have had scant regard for Roman anathemas. The only potential weapon that the Church might utilize was the force of French public opinion, but in July there seemed scant hope of arousing significant protests and demonstrations against governmental policy. All citizens assuredly did not enthusiastically approve the cabinet's anticlerical program, but neither did they evidence any inclination to rescue the congregations from their impending fate.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6268, Statistiques sur les congrégations, demandes de l'autorisation. Undated note of Waldeck to the Council of State (Probably July, 1901).

[2] *La Libre Parole*, 7 July 1901, p. 2.

The unauthorized orders were therefore left to resolve their distasteful dilemma without being unduly influenced by external forces. On the one hand, they could acquiesce and submit themselves to the authority of the state and the bishops. To do so, however, entailed more than a tacit recognition of secular authority, since under the terms of the Concordat, French bishops were nominated by the head of state and confirmed by the Vatican. Submission to the possible supervision of their affairs by bishops whom some regarded as scarcely more than political functionaries[1] was too galling for many orders to countenance with equanimity. The other alternatives of removal to foreign soil or voluntary dissolution were scarcely more attractive from the congregations' viewpoint.

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[1] Such an opinion was expressed by a Carthusian monk in an interview printed in La Libre Parole. A short time afterward, this paper quoted the Superior of the Carthusians to the effect that he knew personally at least six bishops who were intimately associated with the cabinet's policies. (Ibid., 11 September 1901, p. 2; 18 September 1901, p. 1.)

It is not necessary to pursue in great detail a narrative describing how the French religious orders reached their decisions about requesting legislative authorization. A brief summary of the actions of some of the major congregations might however be instructive in indicating the courses of action generally followed by a majority of the monastic establishments. For some, a decision was easily reached after the promulgation of the administrative decree, which dashed all hopes for clemency. The Jesuits had probably never entertained serious intentions of seeking legislative approval, since they were quite aware that a majority of parliamentarians regarded their order as the vanguard of the Catholic opposition to the Republic. "For reasons of dignity," as one Jesuit put it, the Society of Jesus declined to initiate authorization proceedings. Recalling a long tradition of temporary setbacks in France, and taking solace from a historical perspective that afforded them the hope of ultimate triumph over adversity, the Jesuits resigned themselves to dissolution or exile.[1] They were imitated by the Benedictines, who because of extensive teaching activities could no more expect legislative clemency than the Jesuits, and by the Franciscans, Marists, and Eudists.[2]

The Dominican Order was the largest and most important of the several orders that decided to request authorization.[3] By early September the Dominicans had observed all the preliminary formalities required by the law, and they announced that they "would be disposed to abandon teaching and devote themselves exclusively to preaching" in order to receive legislative approval.[1] Edouard Drumont, who desired that all monks should wear martyrs' robes, roundly condemned the Dominicans' eagerness to submit to governmental supervision.[2] The superior of the order simply replied: "I know that we are condemned in some quarters for having requested authorization . . . but we prefer death to exile."[3]

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[1] Le Temps, 8 September 1901, p. 3.

[2] La Libre Parole, 14 September 1901, p. 2.

[3] The Dominicans, the Petites Soeurs de la Pauvre, and the Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne were the first to submit authorization requests. (Ibid., 22 August 1901, p. 3.)

Although most congregations decided upon their respective courses of action without much obvious hesitation, considerable confusion surrounded the activities of a few. The Carthusian Order, with its seat at the renowned La Grande Chartreuse near Grenoble, provided an interesting example. *La Libre Parole* was chiefly responsible for generating much of the uncertainty concerning this monastery, which over the years had become more notable for its famous liqueur than for its contemplative activity. Drumont's paper reported at various times that the congregation would depart France immediately after turning over its lucrative industry to a Jewish syndicate;[4] that it would remain in France because the government was unwilling to lose so valuable a commercial asset;[5] that the order's status was regularized by an old charter that obviated the necessity of seeking new authorization;[6] and finally that the members of the congregation were setting out for the frontier after all, baggage in hand, because the government refused to honor its charter.[1] In the end, none of these accounts proved correct; about all that can be said with certainty is that in mid-October, long after the expiration of the grace period, the Carthusians were still engaged in both contemplation and distillation at La Grande Chartreuse, and according to some sources, planned to stay there until ordered to leave.[2]

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[1] *La Libre Parole*, 6 September 1901, p. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 30 September 1901, p. 1.

[3] *Le Figaro*, 17 November 1901, p. 3.

[4] *La Libre Parole*, 9 July 1901, p. 1. This report would scarcely be shocking to Drumont *habitués*.

[5] *Ibid.*, 10 July 1901, p. 1.

[6] *Ibid.*, 27 July 1901, p. 1.

The religious orders were largely ignored by the government until September 20, when the Ministry of Justice directed an official circular to public prosecutors throughout France, reminding them that the time limit for requesting authorization would expire on October 3. The circular specified that the unauthorized congregations which had neither dispersed nor requested authorization should be immediately subject to liquidation procedures. The circular also requested the prosecution of unauthorized monks and nuns who headed schools, or who taught in schools administered by an authorized order.[3] Prosecution of violators was left to the Ministry of Justice. Waldeck-Rousseau was averse to the application of force against orders showing a disinclination to obey the law. It could scarcely be accounted good politics to make martyrs of the regular clergy by calling out troops and police to evict them bodily from their convents. All indications pointed to the government's desire for a quiet and orderly solution of a situation that had all the potentialities of turning into a most unpleasant business. It is a credit to Waldeck-Rousseau that he did not seek to rush or bring pressure to bear on the monastic establishments, to Pope Leo XIII that he counseled obedience to the law, and to the congregations themselves that no untoward incident marred the first phase of the law's application. As for the French people, if they experienced great displeasure with these earliest consequences of the Associations Law, they did not express it through acts of violence and resistance. Indeed, it might be concluded that the Catholic Church had more cause for concern over public apathy to the fate of the unauthorized orders than for the loss of the congregations themselves.

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[1] La Libre Parole, 3 September 1901, p. 1.

[2] Le Temps, 19 October 1901, p. 3.

[3] Ibid., 30 September 1901, p. 3.

Perhaps _Le Temps_ spoke for the majority of Frenchmen in these words inspired by the Jesuits' departure, but which could be applied to all the religious orders finding it expedient to leave France:

> They were in the wrong. Wrong in their role as a religious order, for they supplied fresh arguments to those who like to contend that "the robe makes the monk," and that every monk is in a state of revolt against laic society and civil law. Wrong too as citizens, because one does not have the right to refuse to obey the law. After yesterday [October 3] there is only one possible opinion: the law is the law; it must always be obeyed, regardless of the cost.[1]

During the early phase of the Associations Law's enforcement, the state's administrative machinery had been held in abeyance. The second period of enforcement under Waldeck-Rousseau, from October 1901 through April 1902, witnessed a gradual increase of momentum as various governmental departments charged with carrying out the law proceeded with their tasks. On the whole, calm continued to prevail (with a few exceptions to be noted elsewhere) as the orders generally maintained their policy of conforming to the law. Such sporadic disturbances as occurred were consequent upon a vindictive campaign carried on in the anti-government press. The government continued to ensure the prosecution of violators of the law by the courts. Except for issuing circulars providing for secularization of the disbanded monks and warning against the participation of the clergy in the election of 1902, Waldeck-Rousseau had little enough to do.

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[1] _Le Temps_, 5 October 1901, p. 1.

In the Chamber of Deputies, the fires of anticlericalism still smoldered among the Radicals and Radical-Socialists--elections, after all, were forthcoming in the spring--and fitfully flamed into life. Debates arose over the question of suppressing the funds supporting the concordatory clergy and abrogating the old Falloux education law. Here, however, Waldeck's moderating influence was clearly visible, and he succeeded in holding the "priest-eaters" in check.

Legal prosecution of monastic orders found in violation of the Associations Law began shortly after October 3, 1901. Waldeck-Rousseau, acting in his dual capacity as Minister of the Interior and of Cults, sent the completed list of congregations requesting authorization to the local judicial authorities, who then proceeded against unauthorized orders that had neither requested authorization nor disbanded.[1] It is virtually impossible to ascertain exactly how many orders had requested authorization for themselves and for their dependent establishments by the end of 1901. The Ministry of Cults eventually prepared a statistical analysis, the results of which were not wholly conclusive. Difficulty arose from the fact that the prefects charged with conducting the official inquiry often confused quite distinct congregations with similar names, or failed to classify various establishments properly. Moreover, since no reliable statistics existed for the unauthorized orders, it was necessary to start from scratch with this tabulation.[2] That confusion should exist on so fundamental a question as the number of congregations to be dealt with indicates that the Ministry of Cults must have been very loosely administered in the years preceding 1901.

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[1] Le Temps, 5 October 1901, p. 4.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6268, Statistiques sur les congrégations, demandes de l'autorisation. Note prepared by the Director-general of Cults, without date.

Bearing in mind that statistics on the religious orders represent at best close approximations and at worst little more than educated guesses by the Direction of Cults, the following picture emerges: After the passage of the Associations Law, three authorized men's congregations submitted authorization requests for 44 unauthorized dependent establishments, while 61 unauthorized men's congregations requested legal recognition for 1,966 of their establishments. Procedures initiated by women's orders were more numerous as 161 authorized women's congregations requested legalization of 6,369 dependent establishments, while 393 unauthorized women's congregations submitted dossiers for 1,566 of their establishments.[1]

If the methods of inquiry adopted by the Ministry of Cults appeared rather archaic, it is equally true that the monastic establishments frequently displayed a lack of coordination scarcely in keeping with their reputation for solidarity. Absence of communication between the central administration of a congregation and its dependent establishments often resulted in legal prosecution. In the Department of Aude, for example, where most of the congregations were subject to a parent house,[2] the dependent establishments did not even know whether the parent congregation had requested authorization on their behalf.[3]

Some of this laxity doubtless resulted from confusion about the terms of the law. Many legal congregations erroneously assumed that their own decree of authorization automatically covered the dependent houses they had subsequently established. They were eventually disabused of this notion. Waldeck prepared a circular in December 1901, notifying the orders that each of their dependent establishments must be authorized separately. To facilitate matters, the deadline for requesting such authorization would be extended to January 15, 1902. As a consequence of this circular, a number of new requests were submitted, bringing the total to these staggering proportions: 64 men's congregations submitted requests for 2,009 establishments; 685 women's congregations requested approval for 11,003 establishments, or in total, 749 congregations, 13,012 dependent establishments.[1] When it is recalled that authorization could be conferred only by legislative act, the enormity of the task facing Parliament becomes visible.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F19 6268, Statistiques sur les congrégations, demandes de l'autorisation. Note prepared by the Director-general of Cults, without date.

[2] Le Temps, 9 October 1901, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., 21 February 1902, p. 2.

The prosecution procedure adopted by the Ministry of Justice was simple and direct. After the names of unauthorized congregations applying for the right to existence became known, municipal authorities dispatched a justice of the peace to determine if the monks and nuns who were not seeking authorization had dispersed from their convents. If they had departed, the local court appointed a liquidator to dispose of the property in accordance with the terms of Article 18 of the Associations Law. If it was discovered that an unauthorized congregation had neither requested authorization nor abandoned its house, it was held to be in violation of Article 18, and a court order for its immediate dissolution was sought and obtained. This classic formula was applied without difficulty in most areas.[1] Sometimes, however, congregations decided to contest the dissolution decree. This was the case with the Order of the Petites Soeurs de l'Assomption in Paris, where the sisters hired an attorney to represent them in their efforts to avoid dispersion.[2] Such opposition was futile in view of the law's explicit provisions, however, and the Soeurs de l'Assomption, like other unauthorized congregations that combatted the dissolution decrees, were without fail dissolved.[3]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6268, Statistiques sur les congrégations, demandes de l'autorisation. Note prepared by the Director-general of Cults, without date.

The number of prosecutions for refusal to comply with the law was quite small in the period from October, 1901 to April, 1902. Most of the orders not seeking authorization had already dispersed, and their members had gone into exile, or into the ranks of the secular clergy. In this same period there were even fewer actions brought against private persons for infringement of Articles 14 and 17 of the law.[4] A number of prosecutions resulted from violations of regulations governing the secularization[5] of members of dissolved congregations. Waldeck, acting in his capacity of

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[1] Le Temps, 19 October 1901, p. 3; La Libre Parole, 25 October 1901, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., 28 December 1901, p. 3.

[3] La Libre Parole, 4 January 1902, p. 2.

[4] It will be recalled that Article 14 forbade members of unauthorized congregations to teach in any laic or clerical school on pain of monetary fine of school authorities and closing of the school. Article 17 defined "interposed persons"--laic or clerical intermediaries who might attempt to act on behalf of a congregation in situations where it could not legally act for itself.

[5] The term originated in the distinction between the regular or monastic clergy and the secular or parochial clergy of the Catholic Church. Secularization occurred when a religious was released from his monastic vows and reverted to the status of an ordinary priest.

Minister of Cults, had prepared a circular outlining secularization procedures in late November 1901.

The requirements set forth by Waldeck-Rousseau proved complex and in some instances burdensome to the regular clergy. Nothing, however, demonstrates so graphically the deep-seated distrust and suspicion with which the French government viewed the Catholic religious orders as the circular prepared by the eminently moderate Waldeck-Rousseau. The document, based upon a Napoleonic decree, addressed itself to two main considerations: First, Waldeck categorically declared that secularization of a monk must never be accorded in the place where his monastery was established; he must return to and live in his diocese of origin (the diocese in which he had been ordained). This requirement would prevent secularized clerics from remaining at the site of the congregation, "thereby enabling the congregation to reconstitute itself under another form." Secondly, Waldeck decreed that unless a congregation had completely dissolved and no longer existed, even on foreign soil, its members could not be received back into the secular clergy. "A member of an existing congregation," Waldeck wrote, "--regardless of the location to which it has removed--cannot be admitted into the parochial clergy. Therefore, the secularization of a member of the Society of Jesus is unacceptable, even though this congregation no longer exists in France . . ." The prefects were admonished to investigate carefully the credentials presented by monks and nuns seeking secularization; it was especially important to verify that they had been ordained in France by a qualified prelate.[1] Waldeck later appended yet another stipulation to the secularization requirements. He announced in the Chamber of Deputies that a monk would not be accorded secularization unless the bishop of his diocese could demonstrate that additions to the parochial clergy were needed and could be effectively employed.[1] Two considerations prompted this ruling: (1) secularized monks accepted into the diocesan clergy would swell the government's ecclesiastical payroll, and (2) there was a danger that the former monks might receive preferment over the established secular clergy.[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F19 6272, Sécularisation: Notes et documents. Ministerial Circular of Waldeck-Rousseau to the prefects, 14 November 1901.

These provisions seemed little short of draconic. To Waldeck's thinking, however, they were justified by past experience and by the nature of the religious orders themselves. He noted in a letter to the Minister of Justice that though the members of many illegal congregations had removed to foreign soil, some had remained in France and in many instances continued to live in small groups of two or three. This situation was contrary to the intent of the Associations Law, Waldeck declared, for "though officially dispersed, the monks may yet be submitted to the same rule, pursue the same object, and play the same role in the state" as when their congregation had been housed under a single roof. The same was true of an order that had moved its headquarters to another country: "If the order's members continue to live in France . . . and exercise the ministry, then that congregation still exists in France, despite the law. . . . If former members of a congregation continue to exercise their functions, even though they are dispersed, the congregation has not truly ceased to exist."[3]

Waldeck-Rousseau observed when he prepared the secularization circular that "the fact of having belonged to an unauthorized congregation does not create a sort of '*diminuti capitas*' in regard to the ex-monk, and does not bar him forever from all ecclesiastic life in the parishes . . ."[1] Yet the strictures imposed upon a secularized monk came very close to doing exactly that. The former monk found his sphere of movement and action severely circumscribed. He was denied a choice as to where he might live and work. He was not allowed to teach, and he might not preach outside his diocese of origin. Moreover, he found himself subjected to a distasteful supervision by bishop and prefect alike. These considerations, taken in conjunction with the formidable difficulties placed in the way of the monk who applied for secularization, gave Waldeck's words a rather hollow ring.

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXV (17 December, 1901), 1086.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6272, Sécularisation: Notes et documents. Ministerial Circular of Waldeck-Rousseau to the prefects, 14 November 1901.

[3] Ibid. Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to the Minister of Justice, Paris, 28 December 1901.

The general unpopularity of the secularization requirements with the regular clergy occasioned numerous prosecutions in late 1901 and early 1902. While it is not necessary to consider these cases in detail, it is revealing to note that the most frequent causes of the legal action brought against monks and nuns were preaching outside the prescribed diocese,[2] teaching without having been properly secularized (this was especially the case with Jesuits),[3] and illegally living together after the dispersal of their congregation.[4]

It is also interesting to note that in numerous cases the Ministry of Cults refused to allow the secularization of members of the regular clergy.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6272, Sécularisation: Notes et documents. Ministerial Circular of Waldeck-Rousseau to the prefects, 14 November 1901.

[2] *Le Temps*, 16 January 1902, p. 3; 23 February 1902, p. 3; *La Libre Parole*, 24 January 1901, p. 1.

[3] *La Libre Parole*, 10 January 1902, p. 2; *Le Temps*, 15 January 1902, p. 4; 28 March 1902, p. 2.

[4] *Le Temps*, 27 January 1902, p. 2.

Official reasons ranged from the monk's having been ordained abroad, or having been a member of an "international congregation" still in existence, or having belonged to an order with a foreign superior, or, as in the case of a former Assumptionist, having participated in "one of the most intransigent congregations" opposed to the Republic.[1]

Restrictive as they were, the rules governing secularization were grounded in French administrative tradition, and in general followed Waldeck's legalistic conception of the proper conduct of church-state relations. M. Dumay, the Director of Cults, nicely expressed the administrative viewpoint when he wrote regarding his refusal to accept the secularization of a former Assumptionist:

> The seminaries . . . being the sole institutions recognized by our concordatory pact to assure the recruitment of the clergy, I cannot agree that the parochial ministry be exercised, under the aegis of our ecclesiastical legislation, by a priest trained and ordained in an establishment the legal existence of which is not recognized.[2]

While many monks were individually enduring the tribulations of secularization, another trial for the orders was approaching as municipal councils throughout France began debating whether the congregations in their areas should receive authorization. Waldeck had not bound the government to regard the councils' decisions as anything more than advisory opinions, but it was thought that their views might be taken as a yardstick of sorts for gauging the congregations' popularity with the organs of local government—and indirectly with the populace—in their respective areas. The tone of the councils' reports reflected that manifested by the parliamentary Radicals and Socialists.[1] Throughout France, teaching orders only rarely succeeded in gaining the councils' approval; this fact constitutes a rather significant commentary upon the attitude of the local politicians--even conservative ones--toward clerical education. On the other hand, charitable orders were often favored by the same councils that disapproved of teaching congregations. Nursing orders in particular had relatively little difficulty in gaining a vote of confidence.[2] The Gallic reputation for gallantry and deference to the weaker sex was scarcely enhanced by the results of the councils' deliberations, for there was no hesitation about recommending the dissolution of women's congregations that were not thought to be useful. Those nuns who devoted themselves to charitable works and to nursing might expect a favorable hearing, but the women's teaching congregations fared no better than the men's. The Soeurs de St. Vincent de Paul were especially unfortunate.[3]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6272, Sécularisation: Notes et documents. Correspondence of Waldeck-Rousseau with various prefects, 1901-1902.

[2] Ibid. M. Dumay to the Prefect of the Department of Oise, Paris, 28 February 1902.

There were exceptions to these general tendencies, even in the troubled domain of education. In certain regions where monastic schools were the only ones or were the best available, or where local authorities were unwilling or unable to provide education if the clerical institutions should be closed, the teaching orders' requests were sometimes favorably received.[4] Conversely, the charitable orders did not enjoy universal approbation, even in areas where anticlericalism was not rampant. Sometimes the contemplative congregations received short shrift, on the grounds that they were of no public benefit.[1]

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[1] Le Temps, 6 October 1901, p. 2; 10 October 1901, p. 2; 22 October 1901, p. 3; 7 November 1901, p. 3. La Libre Parole, 27 November 1901, p. 1; 1 January 1902, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., 20 January 1902, p. 2; 2 February 1902, p. 2; 6 February 1902, p. 3; 19 February 1902, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., 28 January 1902, p. 3; 29 January 1902, p. 3; 1 February 1902, p. 3; 9 February 1902, p. 3.

[4] Ibid., 9 January 1902, p. 2; 9 February 1902, p. 3.

Just as certain speakers had predicted in the Chamber of Deputies, Article 17 of the Associations Law proved to be responsible for the prosecution of a significant number of private citizens designated as "interposed persons." It often happened that the properties occupied by an unauthorized order did not belong to the congregation itself, but to sociétés civiles anonymes (limited liability companies) which either rented the property to the monks or allowed them free tenure. The Jesuits had early announced that governmental statistics notwithstanding, they possessed no property in France, but occupied their houses as guests of the actual owners.[2] As time passed and liquidation procedures were initiated on a large scale, it appeared that this situation applied to many other unauthorized orders. When the official charged with padlocking abandoned buildings proceeded to execute his duty, he was often met by a caretaker or by a member of the proprietary company who protested the sealing of the property.[3] If ownership of the property by the laic association could be proved, and if it were demonstrated that none of the association's members belonged to the congregation in question, the seals were removed.[4] Conversely, should it be established that the limited liability company's membership included even one of the monks or nuns who had occupied the property, prosecution followed for violation of

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[1] Le Temps, 9 November 1901, p. 3.

[2] Le Figaro, 31 July 1901, p. 1.

[3] La Libre Parole, 4 November 1901, p. 3; 11 November 1901, p. 2. Le Temps, 28 November 1901, p. 2; 6 January 1902, p. 3; 11 February 1902, p. 3.

[4] Le Temps, 17 November 1901, p. 3; 19 April 1902, p. 2. La Libre Parole, 13 May 1902, p. 3.

Article 17.[1] Ultimately over a hundred companies were charged with violation of Article 17. La Libre Parole reported in mid-March 1902 that 110 associations renting or loaning property to unauthorized religious orders would face legal action.[2] The properties in question were padlocked on March 20.[3]

If the unauthorized monks and nuns electing to remain in France to try their hands with the unpredictable Chamber of Deputies had concluded in January 1902 that they already faced a situation of unparalleled complexity and uncertainty, if they believed that the government already exercised over their affairs a supervision that approximated tyranny, if, finally, they thought that the bureaucratic channels were already so clogged with the red tape of authorization procedures, secularization procedures, and prosecution of intermediaries that further aggravations simply could not be conceived, they were shortly to be undeceived. In February, Waldeck-Rousseau drew up a circular letter to the prefects, calling their attention to an advisory opinion rendered by the Council of State on January 23, 1902, to the effect that "schools in which instruction is given by members of religious orders constitute establishments of the orders, regardless of who may be the owner or lessee of the school, and regardless of the method of paying the teaching personnel." The prefects were instructed to make this ruling known to the superiors of congregations whose members found themselves in such situations, and to point out that these members must be recalled from their duties; otherwise, the superior must formulate a request for the authorization of the school.[1] In short, in the eyes of the French government, a school employing even a single monk was legally a dependent establishment of the order to which that monk belonged, whether or not there was any other connection. A more sweeping generalization cannot be readily imagined.

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[1] La Libre Parole, 10 January 1902, p. 2. Article 17 defined "intermediaries" rather broadly: ". . . a society composed entirely or partly of members of a religious order, which owns all the property occupied by a congregation after the latter has been declared illegal."

[2] Ibid., 15 March 1902, p. 1.

[3] Ibid., 20 March 1902, p. 1.

The Council of State's opinion aroused a protest from Abbé Gayraud, who wrote Waldeck-Rousseau on this subject in late January, observing that the ruling constituted "a serious threat to Catholic liberty of education."[2] The religious orders, however, raised little outcry against this latest in a series of tribulations, and in the six weeks following the issuance of Waldeck's circular, a great many formulated the requisite demands.[3]

It had become apparent as early as October 1901 that Parliament would not have an opportunity to begin considering the orders' authorization requests until the following spring, owing to the fact that a vast amount of preliminary work must first be accomplished by the ministries of Interior and Cults. Moreover, since the municipal councils' reports had to be evaluated, along with documents submitted by prefects and diocesan authorities, it was more or less understood that the subject would not be broached in the Chamber of Deputies until after the general election slated for March 1902. The election would be regarded as a gauge of public reaction to the anticlerical measures already enacted, and would at the same time indicate a future course of action to the government.[4] It must not be assumed, however, that anticlericalism had become entirely dormant in the precincts of the Palais Bourbon. The Radical and Radical-Socialist deputies had returned refreshed after the summer's adjournment, ready to pursue their anticlerical campaign with fierce pronunciamentos and vigorous, if not always significant, deeds. Even before Parliament reconvened on October 22, the Budget Commission, now come under the control of the Radical Party, had voted that no further appropriations be made for payment of the clergy.[1] "This action scarcely possesses the charm of the unexpected," grumbled Le Temps. Momentarily abandoning its cherished project of luring the Radicals away from the Socialists and into the Progressist camp, the newspaper primly rebuked the anticlericals: "It is one of the traits of the Radical Party to love vain and showy manifestations. Such a weakness is scarcely worthy of serious politicians."[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6274, Lois et décrets contre l'enseignement congréganiste: Application. Ministerial Circular of Waldeck-Rousseau to the prefects, February 1, 1902.

[2] Letter of Abbé Gayraud to Waldeck-Rousseau, Paris, 28 January 1902 in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4567.

[3] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6274, Lois et décrets contre l'enseignement congréganiste: Application. This file contains a large number of replies from prefects to Waldeck, explaining the reactions of the superiors affected by the ruling.

[4] Le Temps, 21 December 1901, p. 4.

Scorning the disapproval of the moderates, the Radicals, abetted by the Socialists, made their "vain and showy manifestation" in December. Alexandre Zévaès and Camille Pelletan, two of the fieriest anticlericals in the Chamber, advocated total suppression of ecclesiastical funds. Zévaès held that the Associations Law had already proven ineffective in handling the regular clergy; sinister monkish forms still lurked in every shadow. "Are we," he thundered, "also going to refuse to strike the secular clergy, which is within our grasp? Are we, impotent and resigned, going to assist the plots against the public schools and republican institutions?"[3] Pelletan, a member of the Budget Commission, seconded his colleague with the assertion that in paying the clergy's salary, "the state finds itself in the paradoxical position of subsidizing the war directed against it." The Concordat benefitted only the Church, giving it the material support of a guaranteed revenue, as well as the psychological support of state sanction. Compared to these advantages, the state's privilege of nominating bishops and some of the curés hardly seemed adequate compensation.[1]

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[1] Le Temps, 10 October 1901, p. 1. Suppression of the ecclesiastical budget was traditionally the prerogative of the Radicals, exercised as a matter of course whenever they captured the Budget Commission. The maneuver was customarily used to initiate a debate on the separation of church and state. It had last been utilized in 1899, when it was successfully opposed by Waldeck-Rousseau. (René Waldeck-Rousseau, Action républicaine et sociale /Paris, 1903/, pp. 336-342.)

[2] Ibid.

[3] Annales, Chambre, LXV (12 December 1901), 993.

To no one's surprise,[2] Waldeck-Rousseau requested that the ecclesiastical appropriation be restored. He denied Pelletan's assertion that the right of nomination was a negligible power. Then the Premier developed the thesis that freeing the Church from all dependance upon the state would render it infinitely more menacing. Separation of church and state--implicit in Pelletan's argument--would be equivalent to

> destroying the only check hitherto imposed upon the Church's ambitious and often usurping ardor. Let church and state be separated, the theory goes, and the Church, shrunken, humiliated, impoverished, will decline and disappear. This line of thought is analogous to that of a man who, having an enterprising and powerful neighbor, and finding himself insufficiently protected by a wall that he has built, suddenly says: "This wall is too weak; I am going to tear it down."[3]

Because of his dependance upon their support, Waldeck could not brusquely announce to his Radical allies that he refused to countenance their proposal. Instead, he resorted to a political strategem, noting that the six months remaining before adjournment scarcely provided sufficient time for serious

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1. Annales, Chambre, LXV (12 December 1901), 998-999.

2. Le Temps had predicted in October that Waldeck would demand a restoration of the appropriation, and pointed out that in former years, even Radical Prime Ministers had made like requests in similar circumstances. (Le Temps, 10 October 1901, p. 1).

3. Annales, Chambre, LXV (17 December 1901), 1088.

consideration of so weighty a question. At his request, the report on ecclesiastical appropriations was sent back to the Budget Commission where it disappeared amid the intricacies of maneuver and intrigue, and was not heard of again.[1] The debate on the ecclesiastical budget had excited little comment in the press, where the general consensus was that the whole affair had been a political ploy by the Radicals, who were merely assembling their anticlerical armament in preparation for the spring's electoral campaign.[2]

In concluding this summary of Waldeck's enforcement of the Associations Law it should first be noted that the period from July 1901 to March 1902 was characterized by general tranquillity. Public manifestations on behalf of the congregations did not occur except in a few areas. The most prolonged agitation centered around the imminent dissolution of La Grande Chartreuse; "dissatisfaction" was reported in localities where the monastery operated charitable establishments.[3] Bishop Henry of Grenoble came to Paris in order to impress upon Waldeck the congregation's value to the entire region, but the Premier was not in town on that occasion.[4] In mid-September, the glassworkers of St. Galonier, who made the bottles that held the Carthusians' renowned product, sent Waldeck a note in which they complained that the order's dissolution would throw them out of work.[5] Still later a petition addressed to the superior of La Grande Chartreuse, enjoining him to request authorization, reportedly obtained 40,000 signatures.[6]

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXV (17 December 1901), 1101.

[2] Le Temps, 18 December 1901, p. 1; 19 December 1901, p. 1. La Libre Parole, 9 October 1901, p. 1.

[3] La Libre Parole, 3-4 September 1901, p. 1.

[4] Le Temps, 9 September 1901, p. 3; 10 September 1901, p. 2.

[5] La Libre Parole, 15 September 1901, p. 2.

[6] Ibid., 12 August 1901, p. 2.

Elsewhere there were sporadic manifestations of sympathy for certain orders. These took the form of petitions of protest addressed to Waldeck-Rousseau,[1] or of public demonstrations and cheers for the monks as they left their monasteries for the last time.[2] Sometimes popular hostility was aroused when liquidation proceedings were instituted; occasionally police protection was required in order for abandoned property to be padlocked.[3] The only protest movement aspiring to national proportions was an attempt to organize in November 1901 a "League of French Women," whose goal it would be to condemn "socialism, internationalism, and above all, sectarianism."[4] Since nothing more was reported concerning this league, it may be assumed that the plan collapsed before it advanced beyond the conceptual stage.

The evidence suggests that during the period in which he was responsible for enforcing the Associations Law, Waldeck-Rousseau remained faithful to the philosophy that had animated his anticlerical program: a philosophy dictating that precedent, rather than passion, ought to constitute the basis for governmental policy. There is perhaps justification for contending that some of Waldeck's views were too narrow or excessively legalistic. The way that he chose to define monastic establishments, for example, or the formidable procedure he established for conferring secularization help to lend credence to his critics' claims that he aggravated an already complex and delicate situation. Yet it must be remembered that Waldeck scrupulously adhered to his practice of working out solidly legalistic methods for dealing with the congregations. Each of his policy decisions was grounded in legal and administrative tradition; he did not innovate arbitrarily. His circulars and instructions to prefects indicate that he was motivated by a genuine conviction that certain religious orders did indeed constitute a menace to laic society and to the Republic. In this light, it is easier to appreciate his attempts to seal the loopholes by means of which certain orders had long escaped governmental supervision.

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[1] Le Temps, 12 August 1901, p. 2.

[2] La Libre Parole, 17 September 1901, p. 1; 24 September 1901, p. 1.

[3] Ibid., 25 November 1901, p. 2; 23 March 1902, p. 1. Le Temps, 8 December 1901, p. 4.

[4] Le Temps, 2 November 1901, p. 3.

Waldeck does not seem to have been motivated by meanness of spirit, or by conscious malice toward the Church and its congregations. His interpretation and enforcement of the Associations Law was firm, but scarcely draconic. He knew that eventually a line must be drawn between anticlerical theory and the actual implementation of an anticlerical program. Waldeck was restrained from a policy of persecution by personal conviction and by political sagacity, and his insistence upon following legal precedents prevented the charge of persecution from being leveled by all except his most bitter opponents. As the new year opened, Waldeck could look back upon two and one-half years of employing moderation as a program of government during one of the most critical periods of modern French history. Perhaps he drew encouragement from the fact that political calm had returned to France during his administration and that his anticlerical program, though controversial, had not stimulated violence or overt hostility. To be sure, the absence of riots and demonstrations could be construed as conferring only the most negative kind of approbation; but the fact that the average Frenchman was not prepared to defend the congregations at the expense of defying the government must have been of some comfort to the Premier as he looked ahead to the troubled electoral waters in the spring of 1902.

Chapter V

THE DIPLOMATIC SCENE, 1899-1902: GROWING TENSIONS

The Concordat of 1801 had been negotiated in the interest of guaranteeing friendly relations between the French state and the Roman Catholic Church, and for a century it had fulfilled its purpose with varying degrees of success. The existence of the concordatory pact had acquired troublesome ramifications after a hundred years, however, and perhaps most troublesome of all was the fact that French domestic legislation, when it affected the Church or the exercise of public worship in any way, nearly always became a diplomatic issue. The Associations Law provides a case in point. As was customary with states enjoying concordatory status, France maintained an embassy to the Vatican, and the Pope was represented in France by a Nuncio. Relations between France and the Holy See, though seldom completely free of tensions, had been on the whole quite good since the early 1880's. The Associations Law, coming hard on the heels of the Dreyfus Affair, was destined to become a diplomatic issue of the first magnitude, and eventually the resurgent anticlericalism that had inspired this legislation severely strained relations between France and the Vatican.

When Waldeck-Rousseau came to power in 1899, France's relations with the papacy were still suffused with the sunset glow of the Ralliement. The Ralliement had been officially inaugurated in 1885 when, at the direct behest of Pope Leo XIII, the prestigious Cardinal Lavigerie of Algeria proposed a toast to the Third Republic, thereby signalling that in the eyes of the Holy See, the time had come when better relations between the Church and her "eldest daughter" were not only desirable, but also feasible. The papacy's new conciliatory attitude was inspired by Leo XIII and implemented by his Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla. The Ralliement amounted to a command from the Pope to French Catholics to abandon their opposition to the Third Republic, to accept democratic, republican institutions, and to disentangle themselves from the decaying royalist cause. It has already been noted that the new policy was not attractive to ultra-conservative Catholic elements within France, and Leo's frank admiration for things French did not receive unanimous approval in some Vatican circles. Since to attack the Pope directly was unthinkable, it was upon Cardinal Rampolla that most of the opprobrium fell. The cardinal had enemies in both Rome and Paris, and plots to unseat him were occasionally reported.[1]

The fanfare that accompanied the launching of the Ralliement has generally served to obscure the fact that the foundations for cooperation between the Church and the Republic were being prepared in the early 1880's, during the administration of that avowed anticlerical, Jules Ferry. In view of the European diplomatic scene following the Franco-Prussian War, it is not difficult to comprehend why France and the Vatican should seek better relations. Thanks to the subtleties of Bismarckian diplomacy, the Third Republic found itself virtually friendless after 1871. The Church too was suffering from bruised pride, for the new Italian kingdom, in acquiring Rome as a consequence of the Franco-Prussian War, had deprived the Pope of much the greater part of his temporal sovereignty and thereby won the bitter enmity of the Vatican. The Kulturkampf in Germany strained that nation's relations with Rome. With the accession of Leo XIII in 1878, the way was opened for a détente between France and the Vatican, and the two wounded powers moved slowly toward each other.

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[1] France, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Saint-Siège. Politique étrangère. Relations avec la France. Dossier général II, 1900. Letter of M. Nisard, Ambassador to the Holy See, to Théophile Delcassé, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 20 March 1900.

The road to better understanding was neither smooth nor straight. There were many points of potential conflict and ample room for misunderstanding between two powers jealous of their prerogatives and fearful of creating the impression that a conciliatory attitude might be interpreted as a sign of weakness. But the obstacles, if not removed, were conveniently ignored and in the 1880's an improvement in church-state relations was visible. Though Pope Leo XIII deserves much of the credit for the détente it is apparent that without a sympathetic response from French republican leaders, Leo's efforts would have been wasted.

The evidence suggests that France's concern for her colonial holdings and alarm over possible threats to her influence within the French Protectorate in the Near and Far East were factors of considerable weight in leading republican politicians to welcome a rapprochement with the Church. As early as 1883 the Quai d'Orsay was becoming suspicious of Italy's attempt to expand her influence at Constantinople and in the Orient.[1] Two years later, it was the Chinese Government that was causing concern in Paris; Peking attempted to remove the Catholic missions in China from French supervision, requesting that these missions be placed under the control of a Papal Nuncio. China, in return, would send an accredited representative to the Vatican. This proposal was viewed most unfavorably at the Quai d'Orsay. The Foreign Minister wrote that "such an eventuality could not leave us indifferent . . .," and noted that France's Ambassador to the Vatican had been warned to be on his guard against possible threats to France's role in the Orient.[1] In 1886 it was Great Britain who excited the suspicions of ever-watchful French observers in the Far East. An English Catholic clergyman revived the proposal that direct relations be established between the Imperial Chinese Court and the Vatican. Count Béhaine, French Ambassador to the Holy See, was instructed to counteract this "manifest threat to French interests in the Far East." Béhaine reported that the Pope had denied any thought of removing France from her traditional role of Protector of Catholic Missions in China.[2] While thus busily engaged in thwarting these real or imagined Anglo-Italian threats to France's foreign influence and prestige, the Quai d'Orsay was equally concerned lest Germany or Austria succeed in gaining a toehold in the important field of Catholic missions in the Orient. Count Béhaine noted that these two powers were preparing sinister moves in China, and warned of "the danger to our prestige that might result from this general movement."[3]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1943, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1880-1906. Letter of M. Challemel Lacour, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to M. Fallières, Minister of the Interior and of Cults, Paris, 9 January 1883.

While it would be repetitious as well as tedious to compile a catalogue of such threats--similar reports occur throughout the 1880's and 1890's[4]--the following conclusion may be drawn: responsible officials in

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1943, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1880-1906. Note prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for M. René Goblet, Minister of Public Instruction and of Cults. Paris, 24 September 1885 (Confidential).

[2] Ibid., Paris, 22 March 1886.

[3] Ibid., Paris, 29 March 1886.

[4] Many of these reports are contained in Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1943, 1944; others appear in Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II, II (1900-1901).

France did indeed view the French Catholic teaching and preaching missions around the world as significant contributors to French influence. The attitude of the Quai d'Orsay was that France should take care to preserve the advantages that accrued to her through the work of the Catholic missions. It requires no great stretch of the imagination to see that here was reason enough for an interest in improving relations with the Vatican.

The correspondence that passed between Paris and Rome in the 1880's indicates that relations were seldom severely strained during this period. Indeed, the most arresting fact illustrated by these documents is the use of compromise and negotiation by both parties in the interest of achieving and maintaining a sympathetic understanding. Consequently, troublesome issues were generally settled before they assumed major proportions.

This era of good feeling did not end with the change of governments in France, but persisted throughout the late 1880's and into the 1890's. Ambassador Béhaine reported on the occasion of Leo XIII's Golden Jubilee in 1888 that French prelates in Rome seemed convinced that real peace was possible between church and state. Furthermore, the Ambassador noted, the French hierarchy appeared resolved henceforth to avoid all acts that might be construed as attempts to interfere in political questions. Béhaine concluded by observing that "if this philosophy indeed comes to prevail in France, we shall certainly be indebted to the fortunate influence that the Pope and the Cardinal Secretary of State have exercised over our prelates."[1]

Thus the way was prepared for the official inauguration of the Ralliement, signaled by Cardinal Lavigerie's toast to the Republic. Preliminary reactions were encouraging; the Bishop of Nancy stated that most of his colleagues would "willingly rally to republican institutions, although all cannot express themselves as clearly as Cardinal Lavigerie, without exposing themselves to local difficulties within their dioceses."[1] In 1897 Leo found it expedient once again to summon French Catholics to a firmer commitment to republican institutions. An official communiqué from the Vatican urged Catholics in France to "obedience to the established forms of power. . . . He [Leo XIII] repeated that they should not directly or indirectly combat the government of the Republic, but that they should, placing themselves upon the constitutional terrain, be inspired by sentiments for safeguarding the interests of morality and religion."[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1943, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1880-1906. Letter of Béhaine to M. Flourens, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 9 February 1888.

In the troubled year of 1899, the Vatican expressed sympathy for President Loubet after the outrage at Auteuil, and the French Ambassador, M. Nisard, reported that Cardinal Rampolla was much agitated by the ensuing cabinet crisis.[3] Then in an audience with Nisard, Leo XIII went to unprecedented lengths in reviewing the bases for cooperation between France and the Vatican. The Pope revealed that it was difficult for the Holy See to place much confidence in Germany because of that country's association with the despised Italian kingdom in the Triple Alliance. "What is going on across the Tiber," Leo said, "shows that only dependence and humiliation are to be expected from that side." He concluded by remarking upon the necessity of "maintaining the union between France and the Vatican, who are called upon to render each other mutual services. Is not France the right arm of the Church?"[1] This papal expression of hopes for continued good relations, coming just after the unpleasant events that had brought Waldeck-Rousseau to power, was destined to be among the last evidences of a rapidly fading period of good relations between France and Rome. In the wake of the Dreyfus Affair and the enactment of the Associations Law, the diplomatic channels between Paris and the Holy See would carry an increasingly large burden of correspondence that reflected ever-mounting tension and gave rise to pessimism about the future of church-state relations. The era of good feeling was at an end.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1943, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1880-1906. Letter of M. de Monbel, Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy to the Vatican, to M. Ribot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 15 December 1890.

[2] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, I (1897-1899). Letter of M. Villiers, Ambassador to the Holy See, to Gabriel Hanotaux, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 11 June 1897.

[3] *Ibid.*, Letter of M. Nisard, Ambassador to the Holy See, to Théophile Delcassé, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 13 June 1899.

Waldeck-Rousseau had been in office little more than three months when Cardinal Rampolla first evidenced concern over the apparent resurgence of anticlericalism in French politics. The Budget Commission had just voted to suppress the ecclesiastical appropriation (Budget des Cultes), but the Cardinal Secretary of State professed little alarm at this time-honored gesture. In an interview with M. de Navenne, the French Chargé d'affaires at the Vatican, Rampolla stated that "we know too well the sentiments of your government, and particularly of M. Delcassé, to take a tragic view of all this."[2] When he brought up recent press criticisms of the religious orders, however, the cardinal indicated that he feared that a major anticlerical storm might be in the offing. He observed that the religious orders wished nothing except to live in peace with the state; the latter, however, had never shown them the slightest sympathy. Rampolla found this odd in view of the fact that there was no difference between the monks who stayed in France and those who manned the foreign missions whose work the government professed to value.[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, I (1897-1899). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 5 July 1899.

[2] Ibid., Letter of M. de Navenne, Chargé d'affaires at the Vatican, to Delcassé, Rome, 13 October 1899.

Shortly after this interview, Rampolla again registered his concern for the welfare of the Church in France. The Associations bill had only recently been introduced in Parliament, and Rampolla stated that both he and the Pope were discouraged by this event. M. Nisard, recently returned to Rome after a sojourn in France, and therefore presumably in a position to speak with authority, attempted to reassure the cardinal:

> I replied that the declarations I had received from the President of the Republic, as well as from the Premier and from Your Excellency, did not justify such pessimistic thoughts. . . . The government was obliged to take measures necessary to the defense of republican institutions; the true character of these measures, and the motives that had dictated them, should not be misunderstood. The government in no way intended to abandon France's traditional policies toward the Vatican.[2]

Rampolla did not find this declaration wholly reassuring and he warned that

> the Pope could not forget that he was the chief of all Catholic Christendom. How could he remain indifferent to bills or acts which must result in a more or less direct attack upon so considerable a part of the interests in his charge? . . . Such a situation became all the more painful when one considered the fashion in which other powers--England, and especially Germany--behaved toward the Vatican.[3]

The year 1899 thus closed upon a not altogether happy note. Though both Paris and Rome still found it politic to behave as though no cloud had arisen to cast a shadow upon their good relations, the diplomatic correspondence makes it clear that the French government had been less than perfectly candid about its intentions in regard to the Associations bill, and that the Holy See, justifiably alarmed by the changing temper observable in France, was hardening its own position. Events of the next year would administer further shocks to the lines of diplomatic communication.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, I (1897-1899). Letter of de Navenne to Delcassé, Rome, 13 October 1899.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 23 November 1899.

[3] Ibid.

The new year had scarcely begun when the government opened its prosecution of the Assumptionists. This affair immediately caused further difficulties in French relations with the Holy See. In mid-January, reports circulated in Rome to the effect that the Congregation of Ecclesiastical Affairs, one of the governing organs of the Church, had become sufficiently disturbed to occupy itself with the religious situation in France. It was rumored that appeals from French Catholics calling upon Leo XIII to intervene on behalf of the monastic orders would result in a personal letter from the Pope to President Loubet.[1] The Quai d'Orsay took little notice of these Roman rumors, probably because it was preoccupied with the implications of the visit Cardinal Richard had just paid the Assumptionists. On orders from Waldeck-Rousseau, Delcassé instructed Nisard to make it immediately known to Rampolla that unpleasant consequences might be expected unless the Pope used his influence to discourage further demonstrations on the part of the episcopacy.[2]

It will be recalled that the dissolution of the Assumptionist Order resulted in the suspension of the salaries of certain bishops who sympathized too warmly with the Assumptionists. In notifying Delcassé of the suspensions,

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II (1900). Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 4, Rome, 13 January 1900, 6:55 p.m.

[2] Ibid., Delcassé to Nisard, Telegram No. 6, Paris, 26 January 1900, 12:50 p.m.

Waldeck-Rousseau requested that these measures be reported to Rampolla with an admonition that "renewal of such agitation would gravely imperil the concordatory pact. . . ."[1] In response, the Cardinal Secretary of State agreed that nothing was more contrary to the Pope's wishes than that the clergy should become embroiled in political questions. Nevertheless, Rampolla continued, the Pope was "painfully affected by the severe measures taken against the bishops, especially since these measures came in conjunction with a campaign directed against the religious orders."[2] Rampolla personally objected to the suspension of salaries on the grounds that the anti-republican agitation came from a very small minority of the episcopacy, and the government did not appear to appreciate the successful measures taken by the Pope in restoring calm to the vast majority. Rampolla concluded: "If the government must engage in such severities and persecutions, the time will come when the Holy Father, despite his sentiments in regard to France, can no longer allow personal preferences to come before his dutes as Head of the Church."[3]

Papal alarm notwithstanding, Waldeck was prepared to pursue his campaign against offending prelates a step further. Not content with merely depriving the bishops of their salaries, the government entertained serious ideas of securing their deposition. Delcassé wrote at length to Nisard about an interview that he had had with the Nuncio, Mgr. Lorenzelli, on the possibility of deposing the most determined ecclesiastical opponents of the Republic. Delcassé had pointed out that such action would serve much-needed notice upon "intemperate prelates." In addition, it seemed expedient for the government to act quickly in this matter; otherwise the Chamber of Deputies might seize the initiative and impose even more stringent sanctions. Delcassé had given Mgr. Lorenzelli to understand that the deposition of several obnoxious prelates was "a necessary political gesture for the purpose of impressing upon Parliament the fact that the government was not remiss in its duty."[1] Since the Nuncio had registered no serious objection to these observations, the Foreign Minister was emboldened to instruct Nisard to broach this delicate question to Cardinal Rampolla.[2] This despite the cardinal's obvious state of mind on the question of the bishops' salaries.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II (1900). Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 31 January 1900.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 8 February 1900.

[3] Ibid., Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 10, Rome, 14 February 1900, 6:25 p.m.

Despite misgivings, Nisard carried out his instructions and saw Rampolla on February 26. After the interview, Nisard got off a hasty telegram to Paris, reporting: "My fears concerning the Nuncio's optimism were only too well founded. Cardinal Rampolla's own words were: 'I shall not speak to the Pope of this _démarche_. He is to receive you in audience on March 6; you may speak to him of the French government's demands and know his reply.'"[3] In a full report that he sent two days later, Nisard suggested that Mgr. Lorenzelli had not fully understood the import of Delcassé's suggestion, or else had not bothered to report it to Rampolla, for the latter was quite taken aback when Nisard broached the subject to him. Cardinal Rampolla unhesitatingly blamed currently strained relations upon the unilateral procedure followed by the government in disciplining the bishops and suggested that if the French government had seen fit to negotiate with the Vatican before initiating its proceedings, many difficulties might have been avoided.[1] A few days after the unpleasant interview described above, there were rumors in Rome about the imminent retirement of Cardinal Rampolla as a consequence of the failure of the policy of conciliation with France. M. Nisard placed no value upon these reports.[2]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II (1900). Delcassé to Nisard, Telegram No. 10, Paris, 24 February 1900, 12:45 p.m.

[2] _Ibid._

[3] _Ibid._, Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 13, Rome, 26 February 1900, 7:45 p.m.

Rampolla's firm stand in opposition to the deposition of bishops achieved its intended purpose, for the government abandoned the project altogether and it was not revived during Waldeck's administration. M. Nisard was granted an audience with Leo XIII on March 8, and the Ambassador carefully avoided all mention of the question of deposition. The Pope in turn did not evidence that he was cognizant of the government's project. Leo merely reminded Nisard of the productive work that he as Pope had undertaken on France's behalf. He had worked for the unity of all Frenchmen, so vital to France at a time when the nation was challenged by German competition throughout the world. The Pope warned that the government's anticlerical policies would prove conducive to internal disunity rather than to solidarity, and a menace not merely to the regular clergy but to the episcopacy as well.[3]

On June 8, 1900, the Trouillot Commission produced its version of the Associations bill, and for the first time the temper of French anticlerical opinion could be accurately gauged. The Vatican's reaction was immediate.

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II (1900). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 28 February 1900. The Vatican had previously suggested to Paris that preliminary negotiations before the government proceeded unilaterally in matters of ecclesiastical discipline would be a useful device for preventing tensions, but the government, jealous of its prerogatives, had refused to consider the proposal. (Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1943, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1881-1906. Letter of M. Poubelle, Ambassador to the Holy See, to Gabriel Hanotaux, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 6 April, 1897.)

2. Ibid., Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 16, Rome, 9 March 1900, 7:30 p.m.

3. Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 9 March 1900.

Cardinal Rampolla, in an interview with the French Ambassador, made a thinly veiled threat that the Vatican might be obliged to reappraise its pro-French policies if the French government persisted in its present attitude. The Secretary of State suggested the opening of negotiations in order to secure a better understanding. Rampolla stated that "we are ready to hear the French government if it wishes to propose modifications in the existing state of affairs. Why not broach to us through diplomatic channels possible reforms, rather than undertaking unilateral measures destined to arouse our protests?"[1]

Little else of significance occurred on the diplomatic scene throughout the summer and fall of 1900, but as the year closed, there could be little doubt that in Rome the prospects for improving relations with France were viewed with pessimism. The position in which the Pope found himself after the apparent failure of his conciliatory policies was also becoming more untenable. In November, M. Nisard reported on the 25,000 French pilgrims who had made their way to Rome in observance of the Papal Jubilee. The old nobility was conspicuous by its absence, as were representatives of the *haute bourgeoisie*. Few Catholic parliamentary chiefs had requested audiences with the Pope. Nisard interpreted these developments as an attempt on the part of conservative French Catholics to show their displeasure at the Pope's policies by "placing the Holy Father in quarantine."[2] The Associations bill too was occasioning increasing concern in Rome. In December, Nisard told Delcassé that "Cardinal Rampolla's language daily displays a graver character, worthy of your attention." In a recent interview, the Secretary of State had concluded by noting: "There is complete self-deception in France if the tolerance of the Holy See is taken for granted in the eventuality of action being directed against the Church."[1] Nisard further noted that the Pope was being urged to make a statement about the upcoming Associations debate in the French Parliament. The Ambassador believed that the Pope would be forced to speak out eventually because of his position as head of the Church.[2] In the last audience granted Nisard in 1900, Leo XIII spoke briefly about the threat posed to the religious orders, and viewed the question from the much broader perspective of human rights: "How can one be deceived about the nature of the effects of measures taken against the congregations, those essential organs of religious life, against freedom of education, and against that most sacred of all freedoms, liberty of conscience?"[3] Perhaps Leo would indeed be led to protest publicly as the Associations bill moved through Parliament in the months ahead.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II (1900). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 8 June 1900.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1944, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1881-1906. Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 28 November 1900.

The parliamentary debates were followed with great interest in Rome. Nisard reported that all of his current conversations with Cardinal Rampolla concluded with references to the probable effects of the proposed legislation. The cardinal indicated repeatedly that Leo XIII was much affected by the government's attitude; it was the general consensus of opinion that the Vatican was receiving a poor return on its conciliatory policies. Rampolla also observed that "our traditional adversaries and rivals"--Britain and

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1944, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1881-1906. Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 5 December 1900.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II (1900). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 10 November 1900.

Germany--were displaying a growing intimacy since Queen Victoria's death and that this seemed ample justification for closer ties between France and the Holy See.[1]

In late February 1901 Nisard was granted an audience with the Pope. The Ambassador reported that Leo had spoken exclusively about the debates in Parliament. The Pope expressed discouragement over the apparent temper of the Chamber of Deputies: "He seemed to have no illusions about the results of the final vote. . . . He especially mentioned the Jesuits, thereby revealing the source of the pressure presently exercised upon the Holy See."[2] As discussion on the bill continued, Cardinal Rampolla waxed more critical in his observations. He stated bluntly that the modifications effected in the bill during the debates had resulted in making its provisions more stringent. When Nisard agreed and suggested that this fact demonstrated the difficulties the cabinet was experiencing in controlling its majority, Rampolla sharply retorted that "the government, save for rare exceptions, did not hesitate to rally to these radical tendencies instead of combatting them; it was actually more and more the Associations Commission's bill that was under discussion."[3] The Pope was especially alarmed over the education provisions of the bill, regarding them as an infringement of the Church's rights in this field.[4] The passage of Article 14 came as "a cruel disappointment" to Leo; Nisard said that until the last minute, the Pope had hoped that the article would be rejected or amended.[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, III (1901). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 29 January 1901.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 26 February 1901.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 19 March 1901.

[4] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 27 February 1901.

Just after the promulgation of the Associations Law in July, Leo XIII issued a formal protest against its provisions. The document was delivered to Nisard for communication to Paris through regular diplomatic channels. Portions of the note were strongly worded, but the protest was by all odds more remarkable for its moderation than for its vehemence. Leo termed the Associations Law

> an unjust law of reprisals and of exceptions, excluding honest and worthy citizens from the benefits of the common law, which equally affects the rights of the Church . . . and at the same time is laden with deplorable consequences. It prevents the Church from fulfilling its divine mission by depriving it of precious cooperation and takes away from France the most zealous apostles of charity and the most efficient propagators of her name, language, prestige, and influence abroad.[2]

The Pope also addressed a letter to the heads of the religious orders, alluding in general terms to the trials suffered by the regular clergy in several countries. The greater part of this missive was devoted to encouraging the monks and nuns in their time of difficulty.[3]

During the time when the Associations bill was being debated, the question of how the proposed law might affect France's prestige abroad had been a chief concern of the bill's opponents. Efforts had been made to secure from the government an ironclad promise that the measure would not apply in the colonies or in the French Protectorate. Waldeck-Rousseau had consistently combatted writing such a statement into the bill, but contented himself with verbal assurances that the law would not be enforced beyond the borders of France.[1] This formula had never pleased the parliamentary opposition, and a number of pamphlets published after the passage of the law made much of the danger it posed to the work of French foreign missions. Concern on this score was not confined to opponents of the law. It is apparent that apprehension was shared by the French Ambassador to the Holy See and by the personnel at the Quai d'Orsay. In 1900 a report was prepared concerning the number of French Jesuits employed in foreign missions. The number was set at 726, with the greater part of these working in China and the Near East.[2] It was predicted in some quarters that the monks would engage in a "ferment of rebellion" when it became apparent that their monasteries were not to receive authorization; one member of the Sacred College observed that the Associations bill was perfectly conceived to strike a mortal blow at the Protectorate.[3] Leo XIII never missed an opportunity to warn of detrimental consequences for French prestige abroad, and he and Cardinal Rampolla continued to predict that dire developments were in the offing.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, III (1901). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 31 March 1901.

[2] Ibid., IV (1901). Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 37, Rome, 6 July 1901, 4:05 p.m.

[3] Ibid., Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 38, Rome, 6 July 1901, 11:15 p.m.

After the promulgation of the Associations Law, the Foreign Office made a belated attempt to influence its application. A representative from the Quai d'Orsay met with a spokesman for the Ministry of Colonies and suggested that the two departments jointly request that they be represented on the commission charged with preparing the administrative decree. Minister of Colonies Decrais was not present at this meeting, and his deputy declined to accept the Foreign Office proposal, stating that Waldeck's promise that the colonies would not be affected by the new law constituted a sufficient guarantee.[1] After this lack of response from the Ministry of Colonies, the Quai d'Orsay acted alone, and its Political Director, M. de Beaucaire, represented the Ministry on the commission.[2] De Beaucaire attempted to insert into the text of the administrative decree a certain "Article 33," specifically exempting Catholic missions from the decree's provisions. The commission suppressed this article.[3] This action came as a disappointment to Delcassé, who had viewed "Article 33" as a means of reassuring the Holy See about the government's intentions, and he was loath to let the matter drop. Accordingly, he persuaded Waldeck to allow "Article 33" to be re-proposed before the General Assembly of the Council of State.[4] This second attempt was no more successful than the first. Moreover, the Council of State refused to accept a compromise solution which would have resulted in the formulation of a separate administrative decree dealing exclusively with the French colonies. The General Assembly ruled that while these proposals did not legally limit the scope of the law, "they called attention to the insecurity of the situation created by the Associations Law, and . . . it was preferable not to agitate matters further."[5] Still undaunted, Delcassé the very next day attempted to persuade Minister of Public Instruction Georges

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[1] See above, p. 52.

[2] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, II (1900). "Les Jésuites français dans les missions," unpublished report, 1900.

[3] Ibid., Letter of M. Barrère, Chargé d'affaires at the French Embassy to the Vatican, to Delcassé, Rome, 30 December 1900.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, IV (1901). Foreign Office Note of 2 July, 1901.

[2] Ibid., Foreign Office Note of 3 July 1901.

[3] Ibid., V (1901-1902). Foreign Office Note, "Loi des Associations," 31 July 1901.

[4] Ibid., Foreign Office Note of 5 August 1901.

[5] Ibid., Foreign Office Memorandum, "Note pour le ministre," 7 August 1901.

Leygues to use his influence for the re-establishment of "Article 33" in the decree.[1] Leygues did not feel able to cooperate in view of the Council of State's determined opposition,[2] and Delcassé was forced to abandon the scheme for lack of support.

In order to calm his agitated Minister of Foreign Affairs, and indirectly to reassure the Holy See, Waldeck-Rousseau early in September wrote Delcassé a letter to be transmitted to the Nuncio and to the French Ambassador at the Vatican. Waldeck stated that the government, in requiring the monastic orders to recognize the jurisdiction of the bishops, had not harbored the intention of interfering with the internal government of the congregations. Concordatory tradition recognized the episcopacy as head of all who conducted or participated in the Catholic religion. For that reason alone did the decree demand that the religious orders submit to the hierarchy and accept its jurisdiction. Waldeck concluded by pledging that the government was not preparing to introduce innovations in established procedures, or to interfere in the spiritual domain. "I have always thought," he wrote

> that the government must be inspired by a spirit of largest tolerance and most benevolent liberalism. I have given instructions that requests for authorization formulated in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Article 18 be accepted and the receipts delivered as soon as the statutes containing the declaration of submission to the episcopacy, and the approval of the latter, are received. The wisest course is to remain faithful to precedents rather than to modify a practice by means of which church and state have got along for a century.[3]

Waldeck authorized the transmission of this missive to the Vatican where, hopefully, it would have a reassuring effect.[1] Meanwhile, Delcassé set about doing some reassuring of his own. In a long note to M. de Navenne, who was in charge in Rome while Nisard was on vacation, the Foreign Minister made some observations--obviously meant to be communicated to Vatican authorities--about the probable consequences of the administrative decree. He confessed that the Quai d'Orsay had neglected to mend its fences during the debates on the Associations bill, and consequently had been taken by surprise by the rapid termination of the discussion. Having failed to secure ironclad guarantees for the foreign missions, the Foreign Office had belatedly attempted to interject safeguards into the administrative decree. Delcassé then related how these efforts had met with a rebuff, and concluded somewhat lamely, ". . . the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is firmly attached . . . to safeguarding the work of the missions, to which it has several times lent secular collaboration for which the Holy See has on many occasions been grateful."[2]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Delcassé to Leygues, Paris, 8 August 1901.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Leygues to Delcassé, Paris, 16 August 1901.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 3 September 1901.

Meanwhile, the arrival of Waldeck-Rousseau's letter in Rome had been something less than a soothing draught to those for whom it was intended. De Navenne reported that Waldeck's observations had had the effect of a minor bombshell. Indeed, Cardinal Rampolla had requested that the letter not be officially delivered to the Pontifical Chancellery, where it would have to receive official notice. The Pope, said Rampolla, was vexed because the letter failed to make any allusion to the person of the Head of the Church, who traditionally held all the religious orders under his direct supervision. De Navenne believed that it was Leo XIII himself who had recommended not giving official recognition to the letter.[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Delcassé to M. de Navenne, Chargé d'affaires at the French Embassy to the Vatican, Paris, 7 September 1901.

[2] Ibid.

This rebuff did not sit well with Paris, and at the earliest opportunity the French government availed itself of a chance to retaliate. In the treacherous waters of diplomacy and protocol, a suitable incident for exploitation was easily discovered. In late September the Ministry of Cults notified the Quai d'Orsay that the Archbishop of Rheims, Cardinal Langenieux (Primate of France and one of the most prestigious of French clergymen), had violated the concordatory legislation by publishing a document emanating from Rome without having obtained governmental sanction. The document in question was an apostolic letter from Leo XIII, authorizing Cardinal Langenieux to journey to Lourdes, there to direct ceremonies consecrating altars recently installed in a monastic chapel. Waldeck-Rousseau requested that an official protest be lodged with the Vatican on the grounds that the apostolic letter directed Cardinal Langenieux to organize "a manifestation in a non-authorized place of worship served by a non-authorized congregation."[2]

The protest was duly lodged, but Cardinal Rampolla treated it as inconsequential, stating that "he did not believe that M. Waldeck-Rousseau attached great importance to an incident of this nature." The Secretary of State further asserted that the letter in question was a private one, sent without his knowledge, and it had not been intended for publication.[3]

Waldeck-Rousseau found this reply unsatisfactory. An apostolic letter could scarcely be regarded as private, he stated. The ceremony called for in the document served to disorganize the ecclesiastical hierarchy since it conferred upon Langenieux the exercise of a mandate beyond the boundaries of his diocese. Finally, Waldeck noted, he could see no utility in the reconsecration of an unauthorized place of worship served by an unauthorized religious order.[1] Delcassé, away from Paris when these observations were transmitted to the Quai d'Orsay, was informed by telegram, and he immediately ordered the drafting of a new protest. This document, stern in tone, contained a veiled threat that the government might "have to use its police power to forbid a ceremony that could be interpreted as a manifestation against Parliament."[2]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). De Navenne to Delcassé, Telegram No. 55, Rome, 17 September 1901, 6:00 p.m.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 23 September 1901.

[3] Ibid., Letter of de Navenne to Delcassé, Rome, 27 September 1901.

Cardinal Rampolla's reaction to this second protest was much more formal than before. He made the following pointed objections: (1) the Vatican had not been responsible for the publication of the apostolic letter, and had no objections if the government wished to prosecute the newspaper that had published it; (2) the Bishop of Tarbes, in whose diocese the consecration ceremonies were to occur, had requested the Pope's démarche; (3) the Pope's instructions did not call for a consecration of the church, but only of new altars; and (4) since the ceremony was entirely religious in nature, he failed to see how it might be considered an affront to Parliament. It was clearly impossible for the Pope to cancel the ceremony at so late an hour, but Leo XIII, as a gauge of good faith, would request the Bishop of Tarbes to prevent any manifestations.[3] This request was duly made and confirmed by the Papal

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 2 October 1901.

[2] Ibid., Delcassé to M. de Beaucaire, Telegram, Serres, 3 October 1901, 7:05 p.m. (The government was more annoyed by the projected date for the ceremony than by the nature of the rites. The observances were scheduled for October 5, just two days after the expiration of the grace period accorded the unauthorized orders for submitting authorization requests.)

[3] Ibid., De Navenne to Delcassé, Telegram No. 44, Rome, 4 October 1901, 6:20 p.m.

Nuncio.[1] Le Figaro reported that no untoward incidents occurred when the consecration ceremony was performed.[2] The dispute was hastily terminated, but it undoubtedly contributed to the growing feeling of tension between Rome and Paris.

Despite obvious setbacks to his conciliatory policies, Leo XIII was not yet ready, as 1901 closed, to abandon the Ralliement as a lost cause. Though he lost no opportunity to express his "sad surprise and painful affliction at the Associations Law and its enforcement," and took occasion to remind Nisard that the French government had often neglected his wise counsel and advice,[3] the Pope evidenced no inclination to renounce his traditional policies in regard to France. Leo realistically turned his attention to future issues; now that the law had become a reality, the Pope expressed hope that "adjustments could be managed in the application of the law, and that the government would not willingly lend itself to exaggerating or precipitating the law's effect. . . ."[4] It was Nisard's opinion that the Pope, with his usual moderation, would facilitate such "adjustments."[5]

Some instructions sent by Cardinal Rampolla to Mgr. Lorenzelli in Paris also help shed an interesting light upon the Vatican's decision not to magnify small issues beyond their true proportions. When the Budget Commission made its recommendation that the ecclesiastical budget should be suppressed, Rampolla advised the Nuncio:

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Mgr. Lorenzelli to Delcassé, Paris, 5 October 1901.

[2] Le Figaro, 5 October 1901, p. 1.

[3] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 5 November 1901.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

> Your rule must be to let the government believe henceforth that the Vatican does not preoccupy itself at all with this threat. . . . This is the only way to stop it, for suppression of the ecclesiastical budget means the abrogation of the Concordat; that is, full and entire freedom for the Church. . . . We firmly believe that this prospect will concern the government, and that our language will frighten it even more.[1]

In February 1902, Nisard reported that he had carried out his instructions to discuss with Cardinal Rampolla the desirability of the clergy's refraining from any maneuvers or manifestations that might be regarded as interference in the upcoming parliamentary election. Rampolla conceded the danger inherent in electioneering and appeared aware that electoral incidents might have a most unfavorable effect upon Parliament just at the critical time when requests for authorization were being received from the religious orders.[2] Nisard further observed that French prelates assembled in Rome for the Pontifical Jubilee were taking pains to demonstrate a correct attitude toward the government's representative. Cardinals Richard and Langenieux, recently the focus of considerable tension both in France and in diplomatic circles, had actually called upon Nisard before going to their audience with the Pope--scarcely customary procedure. Furthermore, all reports indicated that French clergymen in Rome were observing a truly remarkable moderation of language. Most of them had publicly expressed hope that the current religious conflicts in France could be negotiated, and that they might not "assume the proportions that certain political parties wish to give them."[3]

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Cardinal Rampolla to Mgr. Lorenzelli, Rome, 19 October 1901.

2. _Ibid._, Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 12 February 1902.

3. Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1944, Rapports entre la France et Rome sous la IIIe République, 1881-1906. Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 1 March 1902.

For its part, the French government made a conciliatory gesture to the Vatican as Waldeck-Rousseau's tenure in office neared its end. In early February, the Council of Ministers decided that the Associations Law should not be retroactive, and that consequently religious scholastic establishments already operating in accordance with prior legislation would not need to be re-authorized. Delcassé observed that the Nuncio appeared quite satisfied when he received notice of this cabinet decision.[1] So, Nisard noted, did Cardinal Rampolla.[2]

As a final measure of goodwill, the government decided to take official cognizance of the Papal Jubilee set for March 3, 1902. Ambassador Nisard reported from Rome that both the Belgian and Russian governments would send special missions to convey official congratulations. Nisard recalled that in 1893 France had, on a similar occasion, sent an official delegation with presents and a congratulatory letter from the President of the Republic. The Ambassador hoped that similar observances might again be made.[3] Delcassé was pleased by this suggestion and he proposed it a short time later to the Council of Ministers. It was agreed that as in 1893, gifts and a letter would be sent to Rome.[4] When the presentation was made the following month, Nisard reported that the gifts, two Gobelin tapestries, were received with especial delight by Leo XIII, who ordered that they be displayed in the Vatican throne room. Ambassador Nisard was granted a special audience, and at its termination, the Pope broke established procedure by accompanying him to the door. The French special mission, Nisard reported, was received by Leo before all the others.[1] The Ambassador was not a man to cut short a brilliant success. Upon learning that the Austrian Ambassador was planning a special service to be celebrated in the Imperial church, Nisard proposed to Delcassé that a similar service be held in the French national church.[2] This suggestion also received Delcassé's approval.[3]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 4 February 1902.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 15 February 1902.

[3] Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Gouvernement intérieur de l'Eglise. Dossier général II, 1900-1902. Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 4 February 1902.

[4] Ibid., Note of Delcassé, 7 February 1902.

Thus a friendly and conciliatory atmosphere had been restored to church-state relations before Waldeck-Rousseau had left office, and the last official correspondence of Waldeck's government with the Vatican was noteworthy for its genuinely friendly overtones. Despite this amicable conclusion, however, there can be little doubt that under Waldeck, relations between Paris and Rome had deteriorated, perhaps to a point where gifts, a letter, and a special religious service could scarcely be expected to repair all the damage. During Waldeck's administration, in an atmosphere affected by the dying echoes of the Dreyfus Affair, it had proven virtually impossible for either the Vatican or the French government to effect the compromises and the concessions that had characterized the 1880's. Waldeck-Rousseau had to achieve a difficult balance between an attitude that his anticlerical allies in Parliament would not find too soft, and one that would reassure Leo XIII and Cardinal Rampolla that France still appreciated the Roman policy that had made the Ralliement possible. This balancing act was not uniformly successful, and it is apparent that the government's acts and pronouncements alarmed, rather than reassured, the pro-French elements in Rome.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 7 March 1902.

[2] Ibid., Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 18, Rome, 13 March 1902, 4:20 p.m.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 13 March 1902.

It is certain that the Vatican regarded the Associations Law as a most serious threat to the French Church's freedom of action, and consequently to continued good relations between France and the Holy See. Leo XIII and Rampolla neglected no opportunity to express their alarm at this law's possible consequences for education and worship in France. Leo took occasion to note frequently that he personally viewed the passage and promulgation of the law as tantamount to France's rejection of the conciliatory policies that he and Rampolla had faithfully tried to implement. The sense of personal chagrin in Leo's utterances is unmistakable. The Pope's position after the passage of the Associations Law was no less difficult than the French Premier's. Leo found himself faced by a most unpleasant dilemma: if he assumed a militant attitude and undertook a really effective counterattack against French anticlericalism, he would be implicitly admitting the failure of the principles and policies he had maintained for the past twenty years. If, on the other hand, he meekly submitted to the movement that was now evidencing itself in France, his critics would be quick to charge that he was neglecting the fundamental interests of the Church. By the spring of 1902, the Pope had apparently concluded that continued acquiescence on his part might be interpreted as weakness, and construed as an invitation to further aggression. Regretfully and slowly the Pope was being forced into a position where he must ultimately take a stand that could mean the end of the Ralliement. Even as Leo XIII was moving in this direction, however, he was still hopeful that some "adjustment" might be made, realizing that the real test of the law's effectiveness would not be determined so much by its provisions as by the spirit in which it would be enforced. If the French government pursued a moderate and sympathetic policy in executing the new law, an open breach between France and the Vatican might yet be avoided.

Concern over the possible consequences of the Associations Law was by no means confined to Rome. In Paris, especially in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was genuine apprehension lest France's prestige and influence abroad be damaged if the Catholic missions should abandon their work in education. Both Nisard and Delcassé were convinced that the missions played an invaluable role in this sphere. The strength of Delcassé's conviction is illustrated by his determined if belated efforts to influence the preparation of the administrative decree.

There was another, more subtle manner in which the passage of the Associations Law and the resurgent anticlericalism that inspired it might work to the detriment of France's long-range interests. In January 1900, when Leo XIII was suffering one of his periodic bouts with illness, speculation was rampant about the succession to the throne of St. Peter. Ambassador Nisard observed that one of the strong contenders was "definitely a candidate of the Triple Alliance." But Nisard was not unduly pessimistic. Despite a tradition that the Papal Secretary of State never succeeded to the papacy, Cardinal Rampolla occupied a strong position in Vatican politics, and even if he himself did not succeed Leo, with his large number of supporters Rampolla would doubtless be influential in the election of a successor. Implicit in Nisard's observations was the idea that since Rampolla was intimately connected with Leo XIII's pro-French policies and with the Ralliement, it would be to France's advantage to remain on good terms with the cardinal and to assure him of whatever support was in France's power to give.[1] Nisard later reported the existence in Rome of a subversive plot to unseat Cardinal Rampolla and to undermine his influence. The Papal Secretary of State, Nisard related, had alluded several times to the support he had always received and must continue to receive from France. Delcassé noted in the margin of this dispatch the single word: "Certainly."[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., Gouv. Int., II (1900-1902). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 20 January 1900.

Exactly one year later, Nisard had occasion to write Delcassé again on the subject of a successor to Leo XIII, and some of the Ambassador's remarks seem worth quoting at length for the light they shed upon the shifting situation in Rome. Reviewing his year's work, Nisard recalled that when he had taken the post in Rome, he had been instructed to

> neglect no effort to prepare the way for the candidacy preferred by France, that of the chief collaborator of Leo XIII, the minister who appeared called to continue the policy of which he had been the faithful and dedicated servant. . . . This candidacy was obstructed because of the tradition that the Secretary of State never succeeds the Pope, and because of Rampolla's age, and because of possible maneuvers by the Triple Alliance. . . . Therefore I was to concentrate upon a second point: that of supporting his activity on behalf of the candidate whom he would have adopted and more or less directly designated as most suitable for continuing the tradition created by Leo XIII and himself.
>
> It will not escape Your Excellency that the situation created by the dispositions taken in Parliament over the past year have resulted in a noticeable diminution of Cardinal Rampolla's prospects not merely as an eventual candidate for the Papacy, but even as Great Elector. . . .
>
> When I arrived here, the entente between France and the Vatican, the principal object to which the Secretary of State was unreservedly devoted, appeared as close as possible. The Vatican found in it precious guarantees of its independence and prestige in regard to the Quirinal and the Triple Alliance. Consequently, Cardinal Rampolla was considered to have succeeded, and it is scarcely necessary to indicate the value of this success for the authority he exercised in the Sacred College.
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> Today there is only talk of the failure of what is called his policy--to avoid casting aspersions upon the Pope. His partisans are discouraged and hesitant. The undecided range themselves among his adversaries who multiply and scheme. . . . Rather than being an aid

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., Gouv. Int., II (1900-1902). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 20 March 1900.

> toward the success of a candidate of his preference, today the recommendation of Cardinal Rampolla would be without doubt for many members of the Sacred College merely a cause for exclusion. . . . It is not perhaps due to the efforts of his adversaries alone--who are also our adversaries--that the candidate recognized and patronized by us as most in accord with out interests has had to see his chances weakened, if not gravely compromised.[1]

If Nisard's observations were warranted, the Associations Law had indeed exercised a previously unsuspected influence upon the interests of France.

By the spring of 1902, then, it was apparent to observers in Paris and in Rome that since the conception, passage, and promulgation of the Associations Law, there had opened between France and the Vatican a breach that threatened to terminate the Ralliement. A resurgent French Republic, now busily engaged in casting off the last remnants of the isolation that Bismarck had imposed upon it, no longer found it essential to cultivate the Vatican's good will. France had acquired Russia as an ally and was entertaining prospects of drawing Great Britain, and perhaps even Italy, into closer and friendlier relations. With her international position improving, France after 1900 no longer felt impelled to make sacrifices and concessions in order to secure the Vatican's cooperation, and this new attitude persisted despite the threat it posed to a friendship France had valued in the past. The prospects of an open rupture were therefore visible at the close of Waldeck's administration, and it is obvious that the French government, in this matter, held the decisive hand. The Holy See had been placed in a position from which it could not exercise any real initiative. In 1900, the Vatican needed France's support against the usurping Italian kingdom as much as it had in 1871. Therefore, the Vatican was relegated to being able merely to react to whatever line the French government might choose to pursue. If the government of France decided to apply its new law with relative moderation, as Waldeck had done since 1901, then it was likely that amicable, if not cordial, relations could be preserved. On the other hand, a radical anticlerical campaign that seemed further to endanger Catholic education or Catholic freedom of worship would almost certainly place the Vatican in an untenable position, from which it would have to protest--perhaps in a manner that would furnish an anticlerical government ample justification for breaking relations--the treatment accorded the Church in France. For the moment, in the spring of 1902, the next move in the drama being played out between Paris and Rome clearly rested with the government of France. That move might well prove to be the most decisive event in church-state relations since the signing of the Concordat a hundred years earlier.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., Gouv. Int., II (1900-1902). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Romé, 9 March 1901.

Chapter VI

THE ASSOCIATIONS LAW AND THE ELECTION OF 1902: TRIUMPH AND WITHDRAWAL

The Associations Law of 1901 was universally recognized as the most significant achievement of Waldeck-Rousseau's administration. It is not surprising, therefore, that the legislative election of 1902 was for all practical purposes fought around this aspect of the anticlerical issue. It must be understood however that anticlericalism as a political issue had taken on broader dimensions than it had ever previously enjoyed. By 1902, anticlericalism had become--for both its opponents and its advocates--a sort of catch-all in which many of the problems that had long troubled France might reappear, specter-like, to haunt the political scene. The monarchists and imperialists who denounced the cabinet's anticlerical policies did so the better to assert their claim that an authoritarian regime modelled upon that of Louis XIV or Bonaparte would provide a better government for France than the hated Republic. When rabid nationalists defended the Church's rights and attacked the government's religious and education measures, it was obvious that the real grievances of Edouard Drumont and his associates stemmed not from injuries done the religious orders, but from the fact that Alfred Dreyfus, the despised symbol of disrespect for the Army, had been pardoned by the government. And when Jules Méline and his moderate friends in the Progressist Party complained of the attack upon all liberty implicit in the Associations Law, their genuine concern for personal freedom was buttressed by a growing alarm over the apparent increase of socialist influence in the government. On the opposite side of the political arena, unqualified and unquestioning support for the Associations Law served as a general rallying point for opinion favorable to the cabinet. For the Radicals, Radical-Socialists, and Socialists who had supported the Waldeck ministry over the past two and one-half years, the law of 1901 was the symbol of achievement. It was a measure that the leaders of these parties could hold up to the electorate as evidence of reforming zeal. Focussing attention upon anticlericalism enabled the majority parties to draw public attention away from the fact that virtually every other area of social reform, supposedly their special preserve, had been all but neglected.

In the Associations issue, then, were included many social and political questions that had long defied more than a merely temporary settlement. Some were as old as the Revolution; others, such as the question of respect for the Army and concern for national glory, and the fear of collectivism, were of more recent origin. Anticlericalism itself was perhaps the most venerable of all, but the government's recent activity in curbing the monastic orders and disciplining the hierarchy had endowed it with very modern heat and passion. All these issues had been ceaselessly discussed and debated for nearly three years, but as the election approached, they seemed as far as ever from a final solution. Though rather the worse for wear, they presently entered the political campaigning either as independent issues or as part of the Associations controversy, and imparted to the election of 1902 the character of a brief but bitter recapitulation of the debates that had disturbed Waldeck's tenure of office.

In view of the fact that the election was largely focussed upon the questions that had necessitated the formation of Waldeck-Rousseau's oddly assorted cabinet, it would not be much amiss to suggest that the electoral campaign had opened in June 1899. Actually, however, the formal battle lines were more clearly drawn immediately after the promulgation of the Associations Law in July 1901. The first purely electoral manifestation came in the form of a split within the Socialist ranks. A bitter controversy had long been raging between the Guesde and Jaurès factions of the Socialist Party over whether it was permissible for Socialists to cooperate with or to participate in a bourgeois government. The Jaurès group favored such cooperation and participation, but these views could not be reconciled with the opinions of the intransigent Guesdists, who seceded and established their own organization.[1]

At the very time that intransigence was creating a division within the Socialist Party, the Radicals and Radical-Socialists were aspiring to firmer unity of purpose before the April election. In a joint congress held in late July, these parties resolved that their electoral platform would be constructed around the double ideologies of "moderate anticlericalism" and tax reform,[2] an innocuous enough program, but quite in line with their traditional policies.[3]

The opposition parties were also active at this early date. On July 6 the formation of a new political grouping, the Alliance Libérale Populaire, was proclaimed. The ALP, nominally under the direction of Jacques

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1. Le Temps, 1 July 1901, p. 1; Revue politique et parlementaire, XXIX (August, 1901), 386.

2. Revue politique et parlementaire, XXIX (August, 1901), 393.

3. Armand Charpentier, Le parti radical et radical-socialiste à travers ses congrès (Paris, 1913), pp. 1-3.

Piou, was in reality little more than Count Albert de Mun's venerable Action Libérale organization masquerading under a new name.[1] Piou, one of de Mun's chief lieutenants and an avowed opponent of Waldeck-Rousseau during the Associations debates in Parliament, stated that his party was animated by "the old traditions of the French spirit,"[2] a rather vague formula open to varying interpretations. In subsequent declarations, he made it clear that the ALP cherished aspirations of becoming primarily a Catholic party, deriving cohesion from its central purpose of combatting the government's anticlerical measures.[3] But the ALP was not exclusively a Catholic organization; indeed it was to prove most indiscriminate in its choice of allies and associates. In his biography of Albert de Mun, Piou noted that the Alliance Libérale Populaire had been formed to cooperate with the ultra-nationalist Ligue de la Patrie Française. De Mun, long a leader in Catholic political circles, was active in the new organization and made his appeal chiefly to young Catholics, urging them into the combat "with all the energy, ardor, and faith" of their youth.[4] The ALP arose from the ashes of de Mun's old Action Libérale in direct response to the challenge to Catholicism posed by the Associations Law.

The Progressist opponents of the cabinet also entered the electoral fray at an early date. At a party congress in July, Waldeck was assailed for permitting collectivist participation in the government.[5] In September, Jules

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[1] Le Figaro, 6 July 1901, p. 3.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Le Gaulois, 2 August 1901, p. 1.

[4] Jacques Piou, Le Comte Albert de Mun (Paris, n.d.), pp. 203-205.

[5] Le Temps, 9 July 1901, p. 3.

Méline criticized the cabinet's "attacks upon the Army" before an audience of veterans.[1] For the present, at least, M. Méline and his associates appeared content to let the religious issue rest.

At the right-hand extremity of the political spectrum, the conservative warhorses were creaking into the lists, displaying rather faded banners inherited from the days of Joan of Arc. Their campaign was often directed as much against the Republic itself as against the cabinet that governed it. One spokesman for the monarchists announced that he intended to demonstrate that the goal pursued by the Republic "is, in reality, the destruction of religion by underhanded means."[2] The Bonapartists expressed similar views, though frequently in rather more ebullient terms. At one campaign banquet, the speaker violently denounced both the government and the parliamentary system in general. Predicting the election of an ungovernable majority in 1902, he displayed his animosity to the Republic in a magnificent, if frenzied, peroration: "Before this demonstrated impotence of parliamentarianism, Caesar's bed will be readied. Hail Caesar! Napoleon, Caesar of tomorrow, I salute you!"[3]

It is evident that by September of 1901, the electoral campaign was already at least unofficially underway. The various parties' preliminary statements were scarcely surprising, and the absence of viable political platforms only slightly less so. The single criterion established to identify a party's position was whether or not it supported the Republican Defense Cabinet. Apart from this rather elementary distinction, nothing had been offered in the way of social, economic, or political programs except quite vague pronouncements about saving the country from sectarianism and collectivism on the one hand, or ending the clerical menace on the other. Yet this early absence of detailed platforms was prophetic of the entire electoral campaign. In the final analysis, the only real issue at stake was whether a candidate was for or against the cabinet. Usually a politician's stand on the Associations Law was regarded as sufficient evidence of his political loyalties.

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[1] Le Temps, 4 September 1901, p. 1.

[2] Le Figaro, 26 July 1901, p. 1.

[3] Le Temps, 16 August 1901, p. 2.

Of all the opposition groups, the ALP was most active during the early part of the electoral period. It made impassioned appeals to all who deplored the "growing decadence" of France and the menace to liberty of conscience, and Jacques Piou excoriated the social and political ideals of Waldeck-Rousseau.[1] But the nationalists did not lag far behind their clerical associates in oratory, and frequently outdid them in vehemence. François Coppée, addressing the Ligue de la Patrie Française in early December, dredged up from limbo the name of Dreyfus, that "traitor twice-condemned," and went on to deplore "the hatred of our masters for the faith and religious traditions of the immense majority of Frenchmen." In his summation, Coppée sounded what was to become the keynote of all the opposition groups in the electoral campaign: "Do not forget the election next May. In going to the polls, think only of the country. Forget the candidates' shades of opinion and choose them according to their past, their good names, and their characters. . . ."[2] Coppée hoped for the creation of an electoral coalition of all the parties opposing the Waldeck cabinet; a coalition which would conveniently ignore the conflicting ideologies of its component parts

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1. Le Figaro, 18 November 1901, p. 3.

2. Le Gaulois, 2 December 1901, p. 2.

so long as there was unanimity in opposition to Waldeck-Rousseau. The idea of an anti-cabinet bloc was given further impetus when Paul de Cassagnac, a leading spokesman for the Bonapartists, wrote to the Paris nationalist organization a letter expressing his "hope for another savior who will do like him [Napoleon III], who will act as Bonaparte did and throw the Chamber of Deputies, along with the Senate, into the Seine."[1]

Observing with alarm the increasing solidarity of the anti-cabinet coalition, Le Temps undertook to unite more closely the traditionally republican parties. Although it had loyally supported Waldeck's policies, Le Temps had never been able to countenance without acute discomfort the presence of Alexandre Millerand in the cabinet, and it had deplored the fact that the government owed its existence to Socialist support. Therefore, as early as July, 1901, the newspaper began calling for a Radical-Progressist entente, the formation of which would free the government from dependence upon the Socialists.[2] This scheme was given considerable publicity as the election approached, but it was not destined to achieve much success. Both Radicals and Radical-Socialists displayed an obstinate disinclination to move closer to the Progressist opposition, and generally tended to favor cooperation with Socialist candidates.[3]

Not until early in 1902 did Waldeck-Rousseau evidence a personal interest in the electioneering. On January 12, he delivered his only major discourse of the electoral campaign. The Premier touched briefly upon all the goals and achievements of his three years in office, but devoted most of his remarks to a consideration and justification of his anticlerical policy. He described the Associations Law as

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[1] Le Temps, 3 December 1901, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., 27 July 1901, p. 1.

[3] Ibid., 1 February 1902, p. 1.

> useful, [and] essential to the moral peace of the country. The law is being executed; it will continue to be executed in the spirit in which it was conceived, without sectarianism, but without weakness. . . .
>
> At the beginning of the century, we thought that the secular clergy was completely sufficient to assure the exercise of worship. It is no less worthy of our confidence today. . . . The law of 1901 envisages the congregations from the viewpoint of the services they render to public utility; it excludes intrigue but not charity.[1]

Waldeck-Rousseau also had a few words to say about the "anti-cabinet bloc" which had received wide publicity, and which offered its support to all candidates, republican or otherwise, who opposed the cabinet:

> I realize that at this very time people are talking about certain prodigious combinations. . . . Some admire them, others distrust the disinterestedness with which the old parties hasten to offer their votes to certain republicans. They ask only two things of these republicans: first, not to have voted for the Associations Law; that is, to be ready to destroy it. Second, to promise never to undertake education reforms.[2]

It is obvious that Waldeck was as willing as his opponents to confine electoral issues to his administration's anticlerical achievements. A social and political program for the future was conspicuous by its absence. The Premier's attitude was reflected in the speech made by Alexandre Millerand to a gathering of mine workers at Firminy on January 13. The Minister of Commerce gave an address remarkable for its frank opportunism. The long-range goals of collectivism, as far as M. Millerand was concerned, were temporarily forgotten while he lauded the achievements of the cabinet.[3]

The Radical and Radical-Socialist alliance found its spokesman in Senator Emile Combes. In a speech at Nantes on December 2, Combes announced

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1. Le Temps, 14 January 1902, pp. 1-2.

2. Ibid.

3. L'année politique, 1902, pp. 5-6.

that it was "Roman cement" joining together the opponents of the government, and he urged republicans to "march united behind M. Waldeck-Rousseau."[1] A few weeks later, Combes dwelt at greater length upon the characteristics of the anti-republican opposition, exhorting republican candidates to refuse support from the conservative groups. "Truly republican candidates," said Combes, "will have refrained from all equivocal collaboration, and will not have speculated upon reactionary support; they will not bring clericalism and nationalism with them into the legislature."[2]

Jules Méline, who for many years had been influential in moderate circles, spoke for the Progressist faction that had followed him into opposing Waldeck-Rousseau. Speaking to his constituents at Remiremont about Progressist goals, M. Méline indulged in the pronouncement of a few of the expansive generalities that other political leaders were using to such good effect:

> A republican, I shall always defend liberty, which is the Republic's honor and raison d'être. I shall defend it in all its forms; liberty of conscience, of politics, or education, and of labor. . . .
>
> A patriot, I love the Army as I love my country, of which the Army is the living incarnation; I shall never cease to oppose everything that may weaken or divide it.
>
> Finally, a partisan of social progress, I intend to realize it only through liberty of labor, and a reasonable understanding between capital and labor. I deplore class conflict, more fatal to workers than to employers. The revolutionary collectivist doctrine seems to me the most fatal of utopias.[3]

Indeed, the specter of collectivism constituted a chief source of concern for M. Méline. The Progressist leader criticized Waldeck for his failure to observe what ever true defender of the Republic knew, that Millerand was preparing "the army of revolution" under his very eyes.[4]

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[1] Le Temps, 3 December 1901, p. 3.

[2] Ibid., 29 January 1902, p. 4.

[3] Ibid., 15 January 1902, p. 2.

[4] Ibid.

These representative samplings from the speeches of the most important political figures indicate that during the period from July 1901 to February 1902, the party chiefs said little that was surprising or significant. Despite their polished oratory, they failed to provide meaningful issues and constructive programs. The final three months before the election witnessed no change in this trend. It seemed that the whole election would be decided on the basis of acceptance or rejection of the past program of Waldeck-Rousseau and his associates, with the Associations Law providing a sort of pivot around which the debate could swing. The opposition parties ranged themselves into an anti-cabinet phalanx, thereby relegating themselves to an essentially sterile and negative role in the electoral campaign. The majority parties, for their part, appeared prepared to utilize Waldeck-Rousseau's name as a password, and his coattails as a sort of magic carpet that must inevitably convey them to the shores of political success.

If the political leaders of France failed to present constructive programs and issues to the public, the chief organs of opinion did no better. In a statement that might easily have served as the political philosophy for the anti-cabinet bloc, Le Gaulois asserted that its only concern with the coming election lay in assuring Waldeck's defeat by any possible means. "M. Méline," it proclaimed, "is the adversary of Waldeck-Rousseau. We must then assure the success of M. Méline, without preoccupying ourselves about his feelings regarding us."[1] On the same page, the editor sought also to drum up support for the nationalist movement, though the nationalists were about as repugnant to Méline as to Waldeck.[2] Later, the editor of Le Gaulois

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1. Le Gaulois, 20 February 1902, p. 1.

2. Ibid.

wrote: "Inspiring ourselves with our love for the country, we do not pretend to convert M. Méline to our ideas, and I imagine that he does not hope to make republicans of us."[1]

Edouard Drumont, regarding the contemporary history of France from a nationalist and anti-Semitic perspective peculiar to himself, announced that though "Waldeck-Rousseau took over France in a relatively honorable, prosperous and tranquil situation," he had brought to it "moral and political troubles that not even a violent revolution could have produced."[2] Another nationalist writer and candidate for Parliament, Georges Thiébaud, seized upon the religious issue and gave it a new twist:

> "Republican Defense" means defense of every advance made by Protestant clericalism over the whole of public education in order to make our children . . . little Swiss, English, and Germans who read the Bible on Sunday, and who will soon have forgotten the names of Joan of Arc, Louis XIV, and Napoleon, in order to learn other names more honored on the other side of the Channel and the other side of the Rhine.[3]

As the election drew nearer, the abusive language customarily employed by Drumont's paper grew even more vitriolic. "This cabinet was formed solely by the Jewry to save the miserable Jewish millionaire captain who sold defense secrets to the enemy," wrote Drumont.[4] In reference to Waldeck-Rousseau he observed: "We are accustomed to saying that he is a very strong man. Nothing could be further from the truth. His strength lies in an absence of scruples and of moral sense."[5]

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[1] Le Gaulois, 26 February 1902, p. 1.

[2] La Libre Parole, 11 March 1902, p. 1.

[3] Ibid., 8 April 1902, p. 1.

[4] Ibid., 18 April 1902, p. 1.

[5] Ibid., 19 April 1902, p. 1.

Le Temps, casting about for a program which would unite Radicals and Progressists for the purpose of electoral cooperation, at length hit upon a rather inoffensive platform which combined the less radical tendencies of the former with the more progressive ideas of the latter. This platform included reform of the Chamber of Deputies, a reduction of military service to two years, pensions for the aged, and the introduction of financial economies into the budget.[1] Le Temps maintained its faith in the "republican concentration" until the eve of the election, and optimism led it to assert that the Radicals had modified their usual program, while the Progressists had renounced cooperation with the nationalists.[2] At the same time that it was attempting to unite the chief parties of the Chamber of Deputies into a republican concentration, Le Temps vigorously debunked the notion that an "anti-cabinet bloc" was being cemented. The paper took this attitude because to admit that all the forces hostile to Waldeck's government were uniting into an electoral coalition would necessitate placing M. Méline in the same ranks as Drumont, the nationalists, the monarchists, and other unsavory company. M. Méline, despite his opposition to the policies of the cabinet, ranked next to Waldeck himself in the esteem of Le Temps, and it was Méline and his followers whom the paper wished to see make common cause with Waldeck-Rousseau's Radical supporters.[3]

Throughout March and April, the candidates and party leaders made their last appeals. The final positions of the contending parties and groups, going from right to left, were as follows: the monarchists, who had never troubled to declare for any set policy, continued their equivocation. Royalist candidates were instructed to "carry on a purely royalist campaign wherever triumph is assured," but they were urged to support any anti-cabinet candidate in all other cases.[1] The first article of the royalist faith, which had survived every vicissitude of fortune since 1870, and indeed, since 1789, was given clear expression: "The Republic cannot be the definitive form of government for this country, which the monarchy built piece by piece."[2]

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[1] Le Temps, 19 April 1902, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., 23 April 1902, p. 1.

[3] Ibid., 10 April 1902, p. 1.

The nationalist candidate at Valognes, M. de Boisandré, expressed his group's program, or lack of it, when he declared that it was his chief intention to defend the Army and private property. De Boisandré concluded rather expansively: "I shall defend liberty for all, to believe or not to believe, to associate or not to associate, liberty for the father of the family to rear his children where and how he pleases."[3]

Alexandre Ribot presented his personal brand of Progressist liberalism in a speech at Marseilles on March 4. He spoke for complete liberty of education, warned against continued Socialist participation in the government, and reminded his hearers that while he had voted for the liberal provisions of the Associations Law, he had opposed those which endangered the rights of the religious orders.[4] Raymond Poincaré, another leading Progressist, dwelt at greater length upon the pernicious results of the law; he concluded that it "refused certain categories of Frenchmen the long-awaited benefits of freedom of association."[1] Poincaré also had words of caution about growing Socialist influence, gave his blessing to labor unions and to liberty of education, and declared his respect for the Army.[2]

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[1] Le Temps, 25 April 1902, p. 2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] La Libre Parole, 17 April 1902, p. 2.

[4] Le Temps, 5 March 1902, p. 1.

On March 31 Jules Méline spoke at Remiremont and admirably summed up the beliefs of the Progressist opposition. To Méline, Millerand's presence in the cabinet symbolized the whole range of dangers implicit in creeping collectivism, which could only lead to that chief of all Progressist bugabears, "the social revolution." In regard to the religious issue Méline stated:

> I, with my friends, have fought anti-religious propaganda and claimed the common right for Catholics and for the religious orders, without sacrificing any of the rights of the state. I want liberty for everyone. . . . I respect freedom of conscience above all else. . . .[3]

On April 6 the Radicals and Radical-Socialists issued their manifesto, which berated their opponents for falsely depicting France as

> racing to bankruptcy and prey to treason. . . . It is not true that collectivism is menacing the country, or that principles contrary to the maintenance of private property and inheritance have passed into law and administrative practice. It is not true that freedom of conscience and worship are no longer assured, or that Catholics are the objects of persecution; but certain it is that the religious orders have had to submit to the rule of law.[4]

Léon Bourgeois, a Radical chief, campaigned on the basis of having supported

> the government which has re-established order and assured the defense of the national institutions for the past three years. I have voted for the law which, finally giving France the liberty of association promised for a century, cut short the political enterprises of the international religious congregations.[5]

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1. Le Temps, 10 March 1902, p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

3. Ibid., 1 April 1902, p. 2.

4. Ibid., 6 April 1902, p. 4.

5. Ibid., 21 April 1902, p. 3.

The Socialists remained divided over the proper means of hastening the advent of Utopia. On March 31, the Socialist Revolutionary Unity of the French Socialist Party (Guesdist) announced its intransigence regarding cooperation with a bourgeois cabinet.[1] Alexandre Millerand on the other hand, styling himself a "republican Socialist," proclaimed his willingness to continue his fruitful association with bourgeois policies and politics.[2] Jean Jaurès manifested a similar tendency.[3]

While the various leaders and parties were busily jockeying for position and repeating the timeworn formulae, the Catholic clergy had generally followed a policy of remaining quite aloof from electoral politics. Evidence of this policy had been manifested as early as July 1901, when the Bishop of Mende advised all his clergy to avoid interfering in municipal elections.[4] Later, Archbishop Richard of Paris who, it will be recalled, had been reprimanded by the government for his intemperate support of the Assumptionists in 1900, forbade a certain Abbé Fremont to stand as a candidate for the Chamber of Deputies. According to the cardinal, "at this time, no priest can play a useful role in the Chamber."[5] The Bishop of Amiens in a New Year's address to his clergy urged the priests "not to diminish our dignity and compromise our ministry" by entering the political arena as candidates or as active supporters of other candidates.[6] In April, Bishop Lacroix of Tarentaise, returning to France from a visit to Pope Leo XIII, brought some advice from the Sovereign Pontiff about the incompatibility of active politics and the ministry:

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[1] Le Temps, 31 March 1902, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., 23 March 1902, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., 27 April 1902, p. 2.

[4] Ibid., 18 July 1901, p. 2.

[5] Ibid., 10 December 1901, p. 1.

[6] Ibid., 7 January 1902, p. 2.

> Counsel your clergy not to disinterest themselves in the electoral campaign, but to take part in it only as private citizens, always with the reserve and discretion which their sacred character demands. It is necessary that after the campaign the priest be classified neither among the victors nor the vanquished. Since oft-repeated experience has shown that each time the clergy has placed its influence at the disposal of a political group it drew fatal reprisals, it would be wiser this time to affiliate with no party or parliamentary group.[1]

This cautious counsel appeared to receive universal approbation with only one notable exception. In the Department of Lozère, an organization calling itself the "Catholic Committee of Lozère" addressed the following appeal to all the members of religious orders in the department:

> The Church and Freemasonry are poised for the final battle. If Freemasonry wins in the election, the congregations are done for. Then will come the abolition of the secular clergy and finally the ruin of religion in France.
>
> The first of July last, a law was voted, forbidding you to live in France without governmental authorization. If the election goes badly, that authorization will be refused. . . .
>
> The hour is decisive. Praying will no longer suffice; it is necessary to act. It is a rigorous duty. Write immediately to your father, your brothers, all your relatives, and tell them: "If you still love me, save me from exile or from being forced to return home. Vote for, and have others vote for Deputy________. In this alone is safety."[2]

It was not made clear whether the monk was to fill in the candidate's name, or whether that choice was to be predetermined by the "Catholic Committee." The latter case, however, seems more likely.

In official government circles there had been for some time considerable concern as to what possible influence the Vatican might secretly exercise in the electoral campaign. There was the usual speculation that Rome might be able to buy votes for conservative candidates, or might urge the clergy to use its alleged influence over the rural masses in order to benefit politicians whose sentiments were inimical to the Republic. Ambassador Nisard reported that a French cardinal in Rome had been approached by a conservative politician and a reporter from Le Figaro, who promised the clergyman political favors and delays in the enforcement of the Associations Law if he would exercise his influence on behalf of certain candidates. This overture, Nisard stated, had been refused.[1]

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[1] Le Temps, 10 April 1902, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., 25 April 1902, p. 2.

Shortly after word of this alleged démarche reached Paris, a special report entitled "Le Vatican et les élections de 1902" was prepared by the Sûreté générale for Waldeck's perusal. This document purported to shed some revealing light upon the possible activities of Cardinal Rampolla in the approaching electoral campaign. It was asserted that Rampolla was provoked at the French government because of the apparent failure of the Ralliement, which reflected unfavorably upon the Cardinal Secretary of State. For this reason, Rampolla would urge French Catholics to resist the application of the Associations Law, and would recall the Nuncio from Paris.[2] This report devoted several pages to an analysis of maneuvers the leaders of the various anti-Waldeck factions had undertaken in order to win the support of the papacy. M. Méline, it was stated, had attempted to persuade the French monastic orders to "open their treasuries and help out in the election," but had met with little success. Having failed in France, Méline then dispatched to Rome two friends, Denys Cochin and Georges Berger, in order to get the

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, IV (1901). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 8 May 1901.

[2] Unpublished report prepared by the Sûreté générale, 1901, "Le Vatican et les élections de 1902," pp. 2-3, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4605.

Pope to use his influence with the recalcitrant orders. Leo XIII was thought personally to favor Méline and his group, but Cardinal Rampolla refused to make any positive commitments, and Méline's deputies departed dissatisfied.[1] Meanwhile, the report continued, Méline's efforts were being undermined by the Guibert faction of the Progressist Party, who assured Rampolla that Méline was finished as a political power. M. Guibert himself had a forty minute audience with Leo XIII, who allegedly gave the group his official sanction, and agreed to intervene with the chiefs of the French religious orders on behalf of the Guibert faction. The Pope, however, carefully stipulated that his influence must be invisible. The conclusion reached by the author or authors of this document was that the Vatican, despite apparent neutrality, would indeed intervene indirectly in the election.[2]

The picture that Ambassador Nisard presented just before the election differed in every respect from the one related above. Nisard reported that he never neglected an opportunity of speaking to Cardinal Rampolla about the importance of keeping the clergy out of electoral politics. Rampolla, it was noted, already appeared well aware of the "danger of accepting suggestions, the lack of success of which could not be doubted."[3]

Despite its questionable doctrine, the Catholic Committee of Lozère was noteworthy because almost alone among the political organizations in France, it based its appeal upon a specific issue. Within the old political parties, concrete issues never emerged from the broad vistas and vast expanses of oratory about liberty and the Republic. Political principles ranged from the rigid intransigence of the Revolutionary Socialists to the fluid opportunism of the monarchists. Indeed, there was some doubt as to whether the ill-defined political agglomerations which had coalesced into being were worthy of the name of parties. Le Temps finally summed up the situation in disgust:

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[1] Unpublished report prepared by the Sûreté générale, 1901, "Le Vatican et les élections de 1902," p. 6, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4605.

[2] Ibid., pp. 7-13.

[3] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr., St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Nisard to Delcassé, Telegram No. 5, Rome, 12 February 1902, 4:20 p.m.

> We see a camp which calls itself anti-cabinet and nationalist, into which are gathered a few erring republicans along with a rabble of reactionaries and clericals, royalists, Bonapartists, and old Boulangists. We discover another camp calling itself pro-cabinet, where Radicals, declaring themselves faithful to the principles of 1789, rub elbows with revolutionary collectivists, sworn enemies of society founded upon those principles. But these two composite armies, these two bellicose coalitions, are not true parties because they can recruit thanks only to transient crises; because, born of circumstances, they can live only by expedients. . . . A political party, in the true sense of the word, is only characterized by a precise program, resting upon solid doctrine.[1]

Yet these two warring factions were all that were available to the electorate, and both awaited the verdict of the April 27 vote, expressing confidence in ultimate triumph.

In the first election,[2] which was held on April 27, 415 deputies were elected, of whom 214 belonged to the various opposition parties.[3] According to Le Temps (and utilizing its terminology), the cabinet supporters were composed of 152 Radicals and Radical-Socialists, 19 Socialists, and 29 "ministerial republicans." In the anti-cabinet bloc were 114 Progressists, 25 "Ralliés," 33 nationalists, and 38 "reactionaries."[1] La Libre Parole, despite the surprising defeat of editor Edouard Drumont, ran banner headlines proclaiming "An Upset for the Cabinet!"[2] Drumont was partially correct, for a study of the confidential predictions and reports of prefects to the Ministry of the Interior reveals that the nationalists had succeeded in gaining more ground in Paris than official sources had thought possible.[3]

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[1] Le Temps, 11 March 1902, p. 2.

[2] The French electoral system of 1902 was based upon the scrutin d'arrondissement, a single-member constituency system of representation. On the first ballot only the candidates who received an absolute majority of all votes cast in their districts were declared elected. In situations where no candidate had received an absolute majority, a second election, or ballottage was required. The ballottage was to be held within two weeks of the first election, and the winning candidate needed only a plurality of the votes cast. A cardinal feature of this run-off election was the not always aboveboard maneuvering among the political groups during the two-week interval. It was here that the minor parties, such as the royalists and Bonapartists of 1902, had a good chance to make their influence felt. Though they often had no hopes of winning themselves, their support was sometimes eagerly sought by the candidates of the major parties who, to secure that support, might promise modifications of their programs. (Edward M. Sait, Government and Politics of France /New York, 1921/, pp. 163-164.)

[3] L'année politique, 1902, p. 127.

In reality, however, the issue was never in doubt. In the 174 run-off elections, Radicals and Radical-Socialists were in overwhelmingly strong positions, as were the Socialist candidates. The ballottage was set for May 11, and during the period of May 1-11, Le Temps carried a running account of the withdrawals of certain candidates in favor of others.[4] The Blanquist Socialist organization had on April 29 issued orders for its candidates who did not have a good chance of winning to withdraw and throw their support to other candidates who would "best maintain the interests of Socialism and of the Republic."[5] On May 5, a Radical and Radical-Socialist

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1. Le Temps, 29 April 1902, p. 1.

2. La Libre Parole, 28 April 1902, p. 1.

3. Report, "Elections législatives de 1902," in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4614.

4. It was in these désistements that the electoral agreements between the various parties were made and fulfilled. The third-or fourth-running candidates could arrange to throw their support to either of the leading candidates. In 1902, as it will be seen, Radicals, Radical-Socialists, and Socialists closely cooperated in the matter of withdrawals, and thus helped to assure victory to their candidates.

5. Le Temps, 2 May 1902, p. 2.

joint committee issued an appeal to the voters to support the republican anti-nationalist candidate who had received the most votes on April 27. It also urged "the strictest discipline" upon all its candidates, asking them to withdraw whenever necessary in favor of the strongest republican candidate pledged to support the cabinet.[1]

A study of the list of désistements carried in Le Temps indicates that these instructions were carried out to a surprising degree. Radicals, Radical-Socialists, and to a lesser extent, Socialists withdrew in favor of each other in order to assure the defeat of their nationalist or royalist opponents. Moreover, these three parties quite frequently cooperated to defeat Progressist hopefuls, a fact which must have caused considerable chagrin to those who had advocated Radical-Progressist cooperation.[2] When the final returns were in, it was found that of 174 contests, the "cabinet bloc" had won 120, the "anti-cabinet bloc" only 54.[3] A definitive tabulation by political groups showed the following relative strengths: 228 Radicals and Radical-Socialists, 45 Socialists, 48 "ministerial republicans," 140 Progressists, 50 "Ralliés," 45 nationalists, and 33 "conservatives." The cabinet could count upon 308 votes, and enjoyed a majority of 68 in the new Chamber of Deputies.[4] The government's majority numbered roughly the same as before the election, but it was potentially stronger because it was much more cohesive than previously. The victory of the leftist parties would enable the government to pursue a program based entirely upon their support. The new majority was more homogeneous and consequently more powerful.

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[1] Le Temps, 6 May 1902, p. 4.

[2] These observations are based upon a study of Le Temps' list of withdrawals, appearing between April 30 and May 10, 1902.

[3] L'année politique, 1902, p. 129.

[4] Ibid., p. 130.

Perhaps the editor of Le Figaro was generally correct when he wrote that "whatever one may say, the work accomplished by the cabinet is now ratified, and France approves what it did."[1] The cabinet's policies had indeed formed the lines along which the election had been fought. Both majority and opposition parties had early signified their readiness to stand or fall on the basis of public approval of Waldeck's three years in office. And since the passage and enforcement of the Associations Law constituted virtually the sole positive achievement of the government in social and political legislation, perhaps it is not amiss to view the election of 1902 as a manifestation of popular approval of the cabinet's religious policy in general and of the Associations Law in particular.

But there were other considerations in 1902 that might modify this generalization. The opposition parties' lack of program, as well as their frequently undisguised lack of principle, could easily have driven many conscientious voters who deplored anticlericalism over to the side of the government. At least it should be borne in mind that a vote for the Waldeck regime did not necessarily indicate enthusiastic support for the government's anticlerical policy. In 1902 as always, the ballot possessed all the inscrutability of the Sphinx; the motivation behind a favorable vote could run the gamut of emotions from enthusiastic support to an apathetic feeling that a Waldeck-Rousseau cabinet was somewhat better than royalism, nationalism, or nothing at all. In view of the failure of the opposition parties to provide sensible or attractive alternatives in 1902, voter response was scarcely surprising.

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1. Le Figaro, 12 May 1902, p. 1.

Waldeck-Rousseau enjoyed the distinction of establishing two records during his tenure of office. His cabinet remained in power longer than had any previous one during the history of the Third Republic, and his was the first administration voluntarily to relinquish office without being overthrown by the Chamber of Deputies.[1] Both of these achievements were unexpected. Formed as an emergency measure to unite all republicans in defense of a Republic torn by the repercussions of the Dreyfus Affair, the cabinet had not been expected to enjoy more than a very brief existence. Yet, joining together in one administration quite diverse and traditionally hostile factions, Waldeck's government had provided a strong and stable government for three years. Now suddenly in May of 1902, just after winning a gratifying victory at the polls, Waldeck announced that the cabinet would resign before the new Chamber of Deputies convened.[2]

Though _Le Temps_' May 21 report was the first official mention of the resignation, Waldeck had hinted late in April that he was considering such a move. Upon hearing the results of the first ballot in the election, the Premier was reported to have remarked rather cryptically, "If the election had not gone well, I should have had to sacrifice my rest to my duty."[3] _La Libre Parole_ in early May had also commented about a rumor regarding Waldeck's retirement.[4]

News of the impending resignation aroused considerable speculation as to the motivation for such an unprecedented act. Seeking to salve the wounds

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1. _Annuaire du parlement_, 1901 (Paris, 1902), p. 1078.
2. _Le Temps_, 21 May 1902, p. 4.
3. _Le Figaro_, 30 April 1902, p. 1.
4. _La Libre Parole_, 4 May 1902, p. 1.

of his recent defeat, and quite ignoring the official election returns, Edouard Drumont proclaimed that Waldeck's resignation was proof positive that the government's forces had in reality suffered a setback in the election. "If the electoral triumph had been so great," Drumont wrote, "Waldeck would have had himself acclaimed at least once by the new Chamber. He would have demonstrated his strength by carrying an order of the day and then would have resigned."[1] Le Figaro and Le Temps chose to present more complimentary interpretations of the retirement. The former stated that Waldeck had wished to lay aside his responsibilities for some time. Furthermore, the work of the cabinet was now done; the country was more stable and united than at any time during the previous history of the Third Republic and a more homogeneous administration could carry to fulfillment the policies that Waldeck had inaugurated.[2] Le Temps expressed views very much in the same vein: "For the first time, perhaps, a cabinet program has been fully realized. And here is precisely where M. Waldeck-Rousseau wished to stop: at the point where republicans should seek what unites them."[3]

Meanwhile, the Premier maintained his renowned inscrutability. Apparently oblivious to newspaper speculation and gossip, Waldeck merely attributed his decision to the need for a prolonged rest in order to restore his health.[4] There was doubtless a large measure of truth in this explanation. Waldeck was only fifty-six years old, but during his tenure of office he had had several prolonged bouts with illness. In April 1901, he had

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1. La Libre Parole, 21 May 1902, p. 1.
2. Le Figaro, 21 May 1902, p. 3.
3. Le Temps, 21 May 1902, p. 1.
4. Ibid., 22 May 1902, p. 4.

experienced a rather severe case of influenza.[1] In addition to a series of less serious ailments, in March 1902 he was painfully injured when his carriage was struck by a tram.[2] But, as Waldeck intimated to his friends, and as most of his enemies suspected, there were also important political factors affecting his decision to resign. Edouard Drumont had merely reversed the real situation when he claimed that the cabinet's left-wing supporters had suffered a defeat in the election. They had not only won, they had won too completely to suit the moderate Waldeck-Rousseau. Paul-Boncour, who was present at the Ministry of the Interior on election eve, noted that amid the joy and confusion, Waldeck maintained his habitual reserve. "It is too much," the Premier said. "He commented that this victory, in crushing the opposition so completely, did not engage the victors to abuse it and commit errors."[3] Nevertheless, Paul-Boncour did not minimize Waldeck's poor health as an important factor motivating his determination to retire. He believed that, despite a real desire to return to the relative quiet of the legal profession, Waldeck would have stayed on in office to apply his law "if he had thought that his strength would have endured."[4]

Joseph Caillaux also reported an interesting conversation with Waldeck on the subject of the election and his resignation. The Premier confided to his Minister of Finances:

> The election of 1902 has brought a Radical-dominated majority to the Chamber of Deputies. I do not belong to the Radical Party. . . . I know the power of custom . . . I know that the new majority intends

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[1] Le Temps, 5 April 1901, p. 4.

[2] Ibid., 2 March 1902, p. 2.

[3] Paul-Boncour, Entre deux guerres, p. 124.

[4] Ibid., p. 142.

> to be led by men whose past places them within the Radical ranks. It would support me for only a limited time. At the end of a few months it would reverse me in order to place at its head parliamentarians who have always been its own. Wisdom dictates that I should retire, designating my successor, a Radical in good standing . . . who will be moderate enough to apply in a useful way the reforms that we have made, especially the Associations Law.[1]

These observations coincide well with an exposition of his motives prepared by Waldeck himself, and which served him as a memorandum for a conversation with President Loubet:

> The cabinet cannot and should not last beyond the election. The present cabinet no longer corresponds to the demands of current conditions. It had its raison d'être in the troubled situation that existed in 1899. The defection of the moderate party, the necessity of seeking in the extreme Left the support indispensable for forming a majority, explains the presence in the cabinet of the most advanced opinions. I persist in believing that the public good was to be achieved only at this price. . . . We were forced to adopt as our supreme rule the necessity of surviving, of not falling. We had to make concessions of principle while forcing ourselves to deny that we had done so. . . . A change of direction is necessary now, and I cannot and should not make it. I deliberately accepted the duty of governing without my party, against my party. It was easy for my opponents to show me up against my language and policies of a previous period. I saw that and I was resigned to it. My justification in my own eyes and in the judgment of others was in the sacrifice that I made. . . .
>
> From another point of view, it is no longer possible to allow to exist the idea that if I should disappear, there would be no other possible government. . . . Every man disposes only of a certain amount of energy, of talent, of health. I no longer feel able to bear the burdens of office without respite.[2]

It is apparent that by the spring of 1902, Waldeck considered his mandate terminated. The Republic was secure and the cabinet's major goals had been achieved. There can be little doubt that Waldeck-Rousseau viewed the record of his three years in office with satisfaction. But it is equally certain that he felt a sense of relief at being able to lay aside the responsibilities of power in 1902. As Premier he had experienced at close quarters the passions generated by the anticlerical issue, and he was beginning to see to what lengths his anticlerical allies were prepared to pursue their campaign against the Church. Waldeck correctly divined that the new Chamber of Deputies, its radical majority flushed with the recent victory at the polls, would be even more difficult to manage than the previous one. Consequently, he decided to allow some other political leader to harness and direct the anticlerical forces in the Palais Bourbon.

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[1] Caillaux, Mes mémoires, I, 198.

[2] Handwritten manuscript of Waldeck-Rousseau, without date, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4615.

If Waldeck were determined to step down for personal and political reasons, then the major question next to be decided concerned who should become the new Premier. As Waldeck's old adversary, Jacques Piou, expressed it, "Waldeck-Rousseau was afraid of his painful victory. . . . He merely agreed to designate the new Alexander who would succeed him. . . ."[1] Waldeck conferred with President Loubet on May 13 and the two men discussed the possible choices for the position. Waldeck-Rousseau kept the following record of their conversation:

> He /Loubet/ passed in review Bourgeois (who would not accept), Brisson (who would not accept, and whom a great part of the majority would not want), Deschanel (dangerous for the Republic and who would be at once overthrown), Freycinet (who could not wish for better, but who had lost a great deal of credit). I replied that there were two ways of viewing the formation of a cabinet. A cabinet in which the Premier dominates and absorbs the other members, in which the Premier is the kind of republican who can reassure both Radicals and Progressists, was the first way. I agreed that in these respects, one did not find anyone who stood out. . . . But if leaders are rare, followers are numerous, and this fact permits the formation of a cabinet in which the Prime Minister does not embody the governmental philosophy. He is the respected and respectable interpreter, not a leader who conceives and executes in full liberty.
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> I dropped the name of Combes. He /Loubet/ did not react, either to subscribe to the idea, or to reject it. . . .[2]

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[1] Piou, Comte Albert de Mun, pp. 215-216.

[2] Handwritten manuscript of Waldeck-Rousseau, "Conversation avec le Président, 13 mai 1902," in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4615.

In Waldeck's opinion, Senator Emile Combes seemed the logical choice for the premiership. Joseph Caillaux wrote that Waldeck was quite positive that Combes should be the "new Alexander." Waldeck-Rousseau told Caillaux: "M. Combes is precisely one of those Radicals in whom the majority will have confidence and who will apply the Associations Law in conformity with the directions I have formulated."[1] These views prevailed; on June 4, 1902 the resignation of Waldeck-Rousseau and his cabinet became effective. On June 6 Senator Emile Combes took upon himself the responsibilities that his eminent predecessor had laid aside.

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[1] Caillaux, _Mes mémoires_, I, 199.

Chapter VII

EMILE COMBES AND THE CHURCH: JUNE-DECEMBER, 1902

Already past his mid-sixties in 1902, the "new Alexander" was scarcely of heroic proportions. Unprepossessing in appearance, Emile Combes was a small, almost wizened figure: short in stature, slight of physique, with a large head oddly out of proportion to the rest of his body. But his diminutive size conveyed no hint of frailty. On the contrary Combes, with his sharp, alert eyes, his shock of white hair, and his trim, pointed goatee, gave an impression of vitality and energy that his subsequent activities were to prove justified. Little of the Olympian detachment that had made Waldeck-Rousseau an effective if cold public personality was to be found in Combes' appearance. Rather he was all fire and fury, nervous and quick of action, the first to leap into and immerse himself in the rough and tumble of the parliamentary arena.[1] Yet he displayed no trace of the emotional shallowness that often accompanies a mercurial temperament. Indeed, it was Combes' persuasive sincerity that constituted his chief political asset; his ability to project an almost religious fervor into his exhortations won Combes the support of ordinary people and earned for him the not altogether flattering but certainly revealing soubriquet of "le petit père Combes."[2] Combes' appearance, coupled with his combative ardor and evangelical zeal made him an easy target for his detractors, who variously described him as "small in size, in spirit, and in sentiment,"[1] or depicted him in cartoons and caricatures with an overgrown head sporting a nose and beard of heroic cast, grotesquely set upon a spindly body, desperately clutching his ministerial portfolio while walking a tightrope stretched between supports labelled Freemasonry and Socialism.[2] In essence, Emile Combes was a figure who inspired strong reactions. His admirers passionately admired, his detractors passionately detracted; indifference and neutrality were not associated with his person or his actions.

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[1] Joseph Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, VI, 190.

[2] Paul Barbier, Les propagateurs de l'irreligion (Paris, 1909), p. 8.

Combes' family antecedents and personal background were in sharp contrast with those of the haut-bourgeois Waldeck-Rousseau. He was born Justin-Louis-Emile Combes on September 6, 1835 at Rocquecourbe in the Department of Tarn, to Justin and Marie-Rose Combes, reputedly simple and pious people. The elder Combes, father of several children, had not been altogether successful at making money or supporting his family in comfort. A tailor by trade, Justin supplemented his meager income by farming and operating a tavern. Despite hard work, he found it difficult to make ends meet and the economic situation of his family deteriorated, rather than improved, with the passage of time.[3] Nevertheless, because Emile--or "Milou," as he was affectionately called--demonstrated a studious nature, it seemed desirable to his godfather, a certain Abbé Gaubert, that the boy be trained for the priesthood. Thanks to Gaubert's influence, Emile was at length enrolled in the nearby seminary of Castres, taking the place there of his brother Philippe, who had decided against entering the clergy.[1] The young Combes was an avid reader and devoured countless books at Castres, as well as at the seminaries of Carmes and of Albi, where he subsequently studied. The works that he read were not all of a religious or theological nature. Michelet, Bossuet, and Kant he found particularly stimulating. His reading, in addition to the research he undertook in preparing his doctorate at Rennes, apparently had the effect of raising doubts about religious truth and the Church.[2] Though it was not apparent in later years, Combes as a youth was much given over to daydreaming and to the romantic sentimentality then in vogue. He was profoundly moved by Lamartine's poems, and for a time aspired to follow in the great poet's footsteps. Alas, the surviving samples of Combes' poetry amply demonstrate that this ardor considerably exceeded his talent, and one can only concur with Combes' own judgment that his destiny lay elsewhere than in the literary field.[3] The fact that Emile Combes was scarcely more suited to an ecclesiastical career than to a literary one had not escaped his supervisor at Albi, and the latter informed Combes of his thoughts on this matter. Emile left Albi without taking minor orders,[4] noting near the close of his life that it was "philosophical studies that freed me from the dogmatic, systematic thought of my youth, and left me a foundation of mystic spiritualism."[1] This ideological emancipation liberated Combes not merely from the Church, but from the teaching duties he had assumed while preparing for his degree. Though it appeared rather late for striking out in a radically new direction, Combes married and traveled to Paris in order to study medicine. He had already begun to rear a family before he was licensed as a physician, and incidentally, had renounced the Catholic communion and adopted Freemasonry.[2]

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[1] Barbier, Les propagaterus de l'irreligion, p. 9.

[2] Anon., Aux électeurs (Paris, 1905), p. 11.

[3] Yvon Lapiquillerie, Emile Combes (Paris, 1929), pp. 7-8, 16.

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[1] Lapiquillerie, _Emile Combes_, p. 20.

[2] _Ibid._, pp. 46, 49. Combes' topic was the psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the controversy between Abelard and St. Bernard.

[3] Jean de Criteuil, _Emile Combes intime_ (Marennes, 1930), p. 16. De Criteuil, Combes' lifelong friend and admirer, includes several of these poems in his biography.

[4] Lapiquillerie, _Emile Combes_, p. 47.

Like most of the other significant events in his life, Emile Combes' entry into politics seemed as much the result of chance as of design. He had returned to his wife's home in Pons to practice medicine, and there he was initiated into politics at the lowest level as a municipal councillor. He was subsequently elected mayor of Pons, a position he retained for the rest of his active life. In 1881, Combes aspired to the Chamber of Deputies, but suffered defeat at the hands of the Bonapartist incumbent. Four years later he successfully ran for the Senate as a Radical, and entered national politics at the age of fifty. At various periods of his continuous incumbency, Combes served on the Senate Education Commission, was Vice-President of the Senate, held the Public Education portfolio in one of Léon Bourgeois' cabinets, and at length chaired the Senate Commission on Associations until the passage of the Associations Law in 1901.[3] Among his colleagues, Combes enjoyed a reputation for hard work and dedication to the public weal, but these are scarcely the qualities that were thought to contribute most to oustanding success in public affairs in France during the belle époque. At no time during his career had he caught the public eye or fired the popular imagination in any significant way. Nor does Combes seem to have been personally involved in the behind-the-scenes maneuvering so often productive of unexpected political mutations. Although not an obscure figure, Combes had received neither the acclaim nor the attention accorded many other republican politicians of the decade preceding 1902. To most observers, Emile Combes' sudden propulsion into the political limelight was as startling as it had been tardy in coming.

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[1] De Criteuil, Emile Combes intime, pp. 35-36. (Letter of Combes to de Criteuil, 12 May 1917.)

[2] Lapiquillerie, Emile Combes, pp. 72-80.

[3] Ibid., pp. 103-113, 115ff.

None professed greater amazement at this unexpected turn of events than Combes himself. He had spent the pre-electoral period of 1902 quietly at Pons, and it was in these isolated environs that he heard the first rumors of Waldeck's impending retirement from public life. Combes dismissed these reports as spurious[1] until he traveled to Paris to confer with other Radical chiefs about campaign strategy. Here he was approached by Léon Bourgeois, Henri Brisson, and others with the suggestion that he attempt the formation of a cabinet upon Waldeck's withdrawal. Combes' colleagues argued that his work on the Senate Associations Commission eminently fitted him for the job. According to his own account, Combes did not lend a willing ear to his associates, but under pressure agreed to participate in a cabinet headed by either Brisson or Bourgeois, and having made this concession, he fled Paris at the earliest opportunity. He remained in his provincial retreat until the reconvening of Parliament in early June, but upon his return to Paris, Combes found that the rumors had multiplied during his absence. On June 2, Combes received word from Abel Combarieu, secretary to President Loubet, that he would be summoned to the Elysée for an interview at 5:00 p.m.[1]

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[1] Emile Combes, Mon ministère, mémoires 1902-1905 (Paris, 1956), pp. 7-10.

President and Senator, though scarcely intimates, were not unknown to one another. Combes and Loubet had once occupied Senate desks in such proximity that they could converse, but apparently the pair had found little enough to talk about. Combes styled Loubet "a conservative republican in every sense of the term . . . who left no one in doubt as to his opposition to the Radical [Party's] program of political and economic reforms. . . . [He had] a distrust of slightly bold innovations, and an invincible fear of Radicalism."[2] Combes knew Loubet well enough to suspect that the President must have required considerable prompting before arriving at a decision to offer him the opportunity of constructing a government. Probably, he thought, it was only through Loubet's deference to Waldeck's wishes, coupled with the President's recognition of the success of the Radical Party in the recent election, that the invitation to a conference had been issued at all.[3]

Combes' assumption was correct. Loubet had already exhausted the more attractive possibilities before he resigned himself to summoning the Senator from Pons. He had waited until after the election for President of the Chamber of Deputies had been held in order to discern which way the wind was blowing in the Palais Bourbon. Léon Bourgeois was elected over Paul Deschanel, which indicated that the Chamber was in a decidedly radical frame of mind.[4] After this disturbing occurrence, the President consulted Senate president Faillières, who recommended Combes for the position of Prime Minister. Unwilling to accept this advice, Loubet next offered Léon Bourgeois an opportunity of heading a cabinet, but Bourgeois, claiming ill health, demurred and recommended Combes. In desperation, the President summoned the old Radical warhorse, Brisson, but the latter declared that he was now without influence in the Radical Party, as the victory of Bourgeois in the Chamber of Deputies indicated. Loubet then sent for Waldeck-Rousseau in order to acquaint him with these developments, and Waldeck stated that "he had no objection to make to the choice of M. Combes."[1]

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 11-17.

[2] Ibid., pp. 18, 19-20.

[3] Ibid., p. 20.

[4] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 202.

These accounts of the circumstances surrounding Combes' advent to power are substantially verified by Waldeck's memorandum[2] and by the observations of Joseph Reinach, who noted that Combes' surprise at becoming premier-designate was genuine; he had never aspired to any post higher than that of Minister of Marine. Reinach further offered a plausible reason for the choice of Combes for premier: "It was generally agreed that he would suffice to hold down the job, for better or worse, until Waldeck's health should permit his return to power."[3]

The interview with Loubet took place as scheduled. Combes relates in his memoirs that while awaiting the decisive encounter, he had hatched a last-minute plan of retreat, based upon his knowledge of the President's aversion to innovations and radical doctrines, and which, he hoped, would cause Loubet to reconsider the nomination.[4] When at length the two men met,

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[1] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, pp. 204-205.

[2] See above, pp. 171-172.

[3] Reinach, Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus, VI, 190.

[4] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 21.

Loubet made it clear that it was Waldeck-Rousseau who had suggested Combes as a fitting successor. Combes immediately countered by firing off his heaviest verbal artillery in order to frighten the President. In view of subsequent events, perhaps it is worthwhile to present Combes' account of this part of the conversation:

> Loubet: Waldeck is acquainted with your work and he thinks that no one is better qualified than you to carry out the parliamentary business that is facing the new Chamber.
>
> Combes: But, Mr. President, this work can be viewed in quite different ways. The legislation concerning the congregations can divide the best minds. Very probably my ideas about the congregations do not coincide with yours. If I should assume power, I would take as a mandate the suppression of every one of the orders.
>
> Loubet: Every one? Even the Dominicans, whom Waldeck wanted to save?
>
> Combes: Yes, every one of them, the Dominicans as well as the others.[1]

Combes noted that Loubet appeared unmoved by this proposed solution to the religious issue. The President merely requested that Delcassé should be retained at the Quai d'Orsay.[2] Combes had failed to dissuade the President. Loubet's "sly equanimity" had deprived Combes of his plan of resistance, and he was sent off for a conference with Waldeck-Rousseau.[3]

The purpose of this second conference was to discuss the possible choices for posts in the new government. Waldeck suggested the inclusion of Vallé, Sarrien, and Trouillot, all of whom had played major roles in the elaboration and passage of the Associations Law. Combes named Maurice Rouvier as his first choice for the Finance portfolio, and suggested Camille Pelletan for the Ministry of Marine. It is noteworthy that according to

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[1] Combes, _Mon ministère_, p. 22.

[2] _Ibid._

[3] _Ibid._, p. 23.

Combes' account, Waldeck registered only one objection: he disapproved of Pelletan. Combes abandoned Pelletan at Waldeck's insistence, and agreed to keep Delcassé in order to please Loubet.[1] Waldeck, therefore, seems to have had a considerable role in influencing the composition of his successor's cabinet, and when Combarieu later complained that the Combes ministry was a "cabinet of parasites,"[2] it should be recalled that the responsibility did not rest solely with the new premier.

The premier-designate and his entourage presented themselves to the Chamber of Deputies on June 10. Before Combes addressed the body, he was promised the support of about forty Progressist deputies (roughly the same number that had supported Waldeck),[3] and he received pledges of wholehearted cooperation from the former colleagues of Waldeck-Rousseau. Combes found these assurances somewhat suspect:

> All of them, as events subsequently demonstrated, nourished with good reason the ulterior motive of returning to power. They convinced themselves that my age, my distaste for office . . . or perhaps some unexpected reverse would sooner or later—and sooner rather than later—lead me to resign my position. M. Leygues, particularly demonstrative, said repeatedly, "Courage, we are here." I had no reason to be discouraged, and having assumed office merely in order to act, I acted without the slightest delay.[4]

Combes addressed the assembled deputies with the bluntness that was to become the chief characteristic of his oratorical style. He was careful to note that the recent election had clearly demonstrated the electorate's

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1. Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 23-24.

2. Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 206.

3. Combes, Mon ministère, p. 51.

4. Ibid.

approval of his predecessor's policies. Then he turned to the religious issue, a discussion of which occupied much the greater part of his time and attention. "Part of the clergy has attempted to confound the cause of the Catholic Church with that of the monastic orders," Combes observed. "Contrary to the spirit of our legislation, they have entered the political arena. Such manifestations are intolerable; we shall have to determine with you if the government's present means of action will suffice to prevent a recurrence of these outbursts."[1] He further pledged that the Associations Law would not be permitted to become impotent, as had so much prior anticlerical legislation. Abrogation of the Falloux Law was also mentioned as one of the cabinet's goals. Finally, Combes listed tax reforms, the reduction of military service to two years, the reform of military justice, and the improvement of workers' pensions as part of the new cabinet's program. The Russian alliance would be preserved as a basis of French foreign policy.[2] Though much of his policy statement was couched in general terms and could be considered little more than a restatement of policies traditionally associated with the Radical Party, there was a perceptible hint of toughening the anticlerical program, and a warning of things to come was implicit in the general tenor of the Premier's remarks. According to Combes, Alexandre Ribot was sufficiently provoked by Combes' proposed program that he exerted his influence and prevented the promised Progressist support from materializing.[3] From the first, then, the new cabinet lacked that minimum of moderate support that the Waldeck government had utilized.

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[1] Emile Combes, Une campagne laïque, 1902-1903 (Paris, 1904), p. 37. (Speech of 10 June 1902, Chamber of Deputies.)

[2] Ibid., pp. 38-41.

[3] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 51.

While Rouvier drew up proposals affecting the income tax, Trouillot prepared a bill covering workingmen's pensions, and Combes devoted his full attention to the religious question and the application of the Associations Law, a dual preoccupation that was to absorb all his energy during his term of office.[1] Before he could launch his program, Combes was interpellated in the Chamber concerning the general policies of the cabinet. In his reply, Combes took an essentially moderate stance in pointing out the necessity of eternal vigilance against "Caesarian reaction and theocratic pretensions."[2] The Premier again accused part of the Catholic hierarchy of harboring belligerent designs upon laic institutions instead of confining itself to religious functions. That segment of the clergy had traditionally ignored the Pope's sage advice to avoid political controversy, and during the recent election, had attempted to influence the electorate. Combes observed:

> This situation must be ended with calm and moderation, but with all the firmness such a state of affairs demands. . . . The government has accordingly decided to remedy a situation that previous administrations have been content merely to deplore, to the end that impunity be no longer bestowed upon religious functionaries because we lack the means of repression in their regard that we possess over other civil servants.[3]

The reference to clergymen as "religious functionaries" struck an ominous note; it recalled previous justifications proffered by other governments for suspensions of ecclesiastical salaries. Continuing in a calmer vein, Combes promised that when authorization requests from various orders were received, a distinction would be made between those that served a spiritual or social purpose and those that were guilty of advocating opposition to republican institutions and ideals. Combes declared:

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 52.

[2] Combes, Une campagne laïque, p. 44. (Speech of 13 June 1902, Chamber of Deputies.)

[3] Ibid., pp. 49, 54.

> We will examine impartially, even benevolently, authorization applications from congregations in which there is simply a question of religious faith or the desire to be of service to suffering humanity. We shall, on the other hand, reply with curt refusals to requests that imply the purpose of utilizing authorization in order to combat state education. Their abuse of free education has transformed religious schools into veritable dens of conspiracy against our civil and political liberties.[1]

Combes also denied that his administration had any long-range program except the continued defense of the Republic:

> We are of necessity constrained to achieve merely that which is immediately possible. Our declaration is not a page we write for the future, it is not even a working plan for an entire legislative session. . . . It is a program of action and a plan of study for the period immediately before us. . . . It is little by little, piece by piece, that changes occur.[2]

By his own testimony, Combes planned in June 1902 to be pragmatic rather than dogmatic in formulating his religious policies. It was not long before the Premier's ability to improvise was put to the test.

As he had indicated in his speeches to Parliament, Combes was particularly concerned with the threat of clerical encroachments upon the domain of public education. Accordingly, one of his first official acts as Minister of the Interior and of Cults was to order an investigation into the number and nature of religious establishments opened since the promulgation of the Associations Law the preceding year. The requisite information was in Combes' hands before July 1, 1902, and it was determined that of some two hundred establishments founded without authorization, about one hundred twenty-five were schools and the remainder were charitable organizations.[1] Combes did not immediately move against the charitable missions, but he could not tolerate the affront offered by the unauthorized schools. He decided to suppress the latter at once, and obtained an executive decree to that effect from President Loubet. A ministerial circular of June 27, 1902 informed the prefects of the necessity of closing the illegal schools.[2] Combes noted in his memoirs that Loubet offered neither objection nor resistance to signing the decrees of dissolution, since the schools affected were so obviously in flagrant violation of the law.[3]

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laïque, p. 55. (Speech of 13 June 1902, Chamber of Deputies.)

[2] Ibid., p. 59.

The immediate closure of the one hundred twenty-five establishments opened after the promulgation of the Associations Law was followed by an attack upon some three thousand that had already been in illegal existence when the law took effect. Combes had no more patience with these schools than with the others and in a ministerial circular he invited them to close voluntarily and then to submit requests for authorization.[4] This wholesale campaign against religious education aroused opposition from several quarters. On July 9, Combes was interpellated in the Chamber of Deputies as a consequence of the closures. He defended his actions on the grounds that they corresponded exactly with the spirit and intent of Article 13 of the Associations Law. After the law had become effective, the congregations had been warned that they must seek separate authorization for each of their unauthorized dependent establishments. It was futile for the orders to maintain that in many cases, their members were merely salaried employees in private schools; the presence of even one monk in a school sufficed for its classification as an establishment for which authorization was necessary.[1] As Combes saw it, the question of whether the government possessed the authority to dissolve or close illegal establishments by decree was easily and logically answered. Since the Associations Law empowered the government to dissolve authorized congregations that violated the law, was it not logical to infer that it was doubly empowered to dissolve their unauthorized establishments?[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6269, Statistique des établissements congréganistes ouverts depuis le 1er juillet 1901. (This file contains reports from various prefects to Combes.)

[2] Ibid., 6076-6087, Exécution des décrets de 1902 sur les congrégations (par départements). These files contain Combes' instructions to the prefects, along with prefects' reports on the carrying out of their instructions. These reports often note whether public resistance to the execution of the decrees occurred.

[3] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 52.

[4] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6076, Exécution des décrets de 1902 sur les congrégations. Circular letter of Combes to the prefects, 30 June 1902.

In the departments, the reaction of the clergy and the populace was mixed. In most cases, the illegal establishments were closed voluntarily within a few days after promulgation of the decree,[3] but on at least one occasion, the presence and participation of local law enforcement agents were required before closure could be effected.[4] Public manifestations in support of the regular clergy were, as in the past, largely confined to accompanying the monks and nuns to the train stations as they returned to their parent houses, or in numerous instances, the circulation of petitions of protest.[1]

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laïque, pp. 69-70. (Speech of 9 July 1902, Chamber of Deputies.) This interpretation appeared unreasonable to a great many observers, and much controversy arose over it in the departments. Combes insisted upon a strict observance of the ruling in these cases. Illustrations of this policy are to be found in Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6076, Exécution des décrets sur les congrégations.

It should be noted that this interpretation did not represent an innovation on Combes' part. In February 1902 Waldeck had issued a ministerial circular to the prefects informing them of the Council of State's ruling upon religious establishments: "Schools in which members of monastic orders teach constitute establishment of the orders, regardless of who is the owner or lessee of the school building. . . ." (Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6274, Lettres aux préfets, février 1902. Direction générale des Cultes et Congrégations.)

[2] Ibid., p. 77.

[3] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6076, Exécution des décrets de 1902 sur les congrégations. The information in this dossier indicates nothing to the contrary.

[4] Ibid. Despatch to the Petit Journal de Paris from Moulins (Allier), 24 July 1902.

Even while he was preoccupied with clerical education, Combes found it necessary to turn part of his attention to that perennial problem, the participation of certain clergymen in political affairs. The Premier had voiced his concern about the clergy's political activities in the recent elections when he made his first speech to the Chamber.[2] To deal with this threat, Combes had recourse to the state's traditional weapon against the clergy: the suspension of salaries. When Combes took office, he found that some twenty-five suspensions were already in effect against the French clergy: four dated from the period preceding 1899, and twenty-one from Waldeck's administration; all of them had been levied because of "political manifestations" against the republican regime.[3] Combes resolved to undertake stern measures on a much larger scale than had his predecessors. Beginning in June, and continuing into August, some eighty-six clergymen of the lower ranks had their salaries stopped at Combes' request. All of these reprisals were justified on the grounds that the affected ecclesiastics had used their influence against republican candidates in the election of 1902.[4] After mid-August, the number of suspensions declined significantly, and those that were decreed had to do with clergymen who had protested the closing of religious schools.[5] It is difficult to ascertain with absolute accuracy how many clerics were affected by Combes' decrees in 1902 alone, but statistics of a sort do exist for his entire period of office. A memorandum prepared by the Ministry of Cults in September 1903 stated that as of that time, eleven bishops were deprived of their salaries (for reasons that will be explained later), eight of them at Combes' request.[1] A second document, undated but probably prepared some time in 1903, noted that 335 clergymen had been the object of administrative discipline, 260 of them for political acts.[2] This memorandum asserted that the state's right to punish clergymen had been used in moderation; otherwise the ecclesiastics affected would have numbered in the thousands.[3] Finally, in a note prepared shortly after Combes' resignation in 1905, it was stated that the number of clergymen of all ranks still deprived of their salaries by Combes' order stood at 342.[4] These numbers might lead one to conclude that Combes' conception of proper ecclesiastical discipline was on the whole authoritarian. It ought to be observed that the French government paid the salaries of some 43,000 clergymen, much the greater part of them parish priests; seen in this perspective, Combes' suspensions take on a less draconic aspect.[5]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F19 6076-6087, Exécution des décrets de 1902 sur les congrégations.

[2] See above, p. 182.

[3] Arch. Nat. F19 6131, Suppressions de traitements. Circulaires et correspondance.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6129, Suppression de traitement, doctrine. Rapport rédigé par le 1er bureau du Ministère des Cultes, Septembre 1903.

[2] *Ibid.*, undated, untitled memorandum prepared by the Ministère des Cultes, *p. 3.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[4] *Ibid.*, 6131, Suppressions de traitement. Circulaires et correspondence. *Note*, "Suppressions en vigeur." (Twenty-one of Waldeck's suppressions were still in effect at this time.)

[5] *Ibid.*, 6129, Suppression de traitement, doctrine. Undated, untitled *memorandum* (probably 1902 or 1903), p. 2.

The whole question of the state's power to discipline the French clergy by the use of economic sanctions had always been a thorny one, charged with sentimental, religious, and emotional overtones, as events were shortly to demonstrate in dramatic fashion. The idea that any secular regime should exercise control over a clergy dedicated to accomplishing God's work in this world had never been palatable to many devout Frenchmen, nor, needless to say, to the clergy. This issue had troubled French politics ever since the signing of the Concordat of 1801. Being on the government payroll placed the clergy in a position vis-à-vis the government dangerously analagous to that of civil servants. And it was as civil servants that the republican regime had preferred to deal with clergymen, instead of placing them in a special category governed by special regulations and dispensations. From the state's viewpoint, the purpose of a salary suspension was not merely punitive, but was designed to cause the transfer of the offending clergyman to another locality, away from the place in which he had compromised himself. The transfer was to be accomplished by the bishop of the diocese, and had to be effected in such a manner that it clearly constituted a disgrace rather than a promotion. Once the offending priest had left the locality, his salary was re-established.[1]

The state's justification of its disciplinary powers over the clergy was succinctly formulated in a note prepared by the Direction des Cultes:

> If it is true that the state must by virtue of the concordatory pact assure salaries to members of the clergy, it cannot then be reasonably maintained that the clergy is free from all correlative obligations to the state. . . . One of the clergy's principal duties consists of obedience to the established government and the observance of the public order. . . . A suspension of salary is merely the abrogation of concordatory privilege in regard to the priest who places himself beyond the bounds of the Concordat by an act of disorder or rebellion.[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6129, Suppression de traitement, doctrine. Undated, untitled memorandum (probably 1902 or 1903), p. 2.

[2] Ibid., Note prepared by the Direction des Cultes, 6 November 1903.

The same could be said in regard to any unruly functionary. It was the government's failure to distinguish between political, administrative, and sacred function that piqued many clergymen.

Combes decided not to leave Paris when Parliament adjourned in July, but remained in the capital in order to deal with a threatened strike by the mineworkers and to counter any demonstrations that might arise from his decrees closing religious schools. He also counted upon utilizing the quiet two-month inter-session period for detailed study of the religious orders whose requests for authorization would have to be acted upon by Parliament.[1] The traditional lassitude of the vacances was disturbed, however, as Combes' decrees closing religious schools brought the government into an unprecedented full-scale conflict with the episcopacy, now rather belatedly arising to defend the religious orders. This struggle with the Catholic hierarchy, which was to involve some of the most illustrious members of the French clergy, continued throughout Combes' administration. The first manifestation on the part of the bishops occurred in July and August, when the full effect of Combes' decrees closing over three thousand schools first became apparent. It appeared spontaneous rather than concerted, and took the form of letters written by twelve bishops to President Loubet, expressing dismay at the closing of so many monastic schools.[2] Loubet was chosen as the recipient of the letters for two reasons: first, the obvious propaganda value of a protest lodged with the most prestigious republican personality, and secondly, as a consequence of a recent speech made by the President, in which he alluded to the need for "social appeasement" in France, interpreted by many to be a sign of sympathy for the religious orders.[1]

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 69-70.

[2] Arch. Nat. F19 6275, La protestation des évêques contre la suppression de l'enseignement congréganiste. Lettres des évêques au Président de la République. (The twelve clergymen were the bishops of Autun, Beauvais, Soissons, Rheims, St. Claude, Nevers, Belley, Versailles, Meaux, Bourges, and Cambrai.)

The general tenor of the letters was not extreme. The writers generally confined themselves to expressions of disappointment that after the hopes of Catholics had been raised by the President's words, they had been rudely dashed by Combes' decrees. The letter of the Bishop of Versailles was especially to the point:

> The bishops are recognized by the people and the state as the chiefs of Christian society; they must direct it, support it, defend it. . . . Your signature, Mr. President, is lacking on these disagreeable dispositions[2] and we are confident that you will never give it. . . . Your word must not be in vain. You have the means to make it respected. Doubtless the Constitution leaves you little occasion for using personal initiative, but you do choose the ministers and you have the authority of your position.[3]

The bishops of Belley and of Meaux objected to the government's power of changing or adding to French law by means of a simple ministerial circular to the prefects. The schools that Combes was attacking had been established in accordance with scholastic legislation still in effect, and deserved protection from such summary procedure.[4]

The government took no action against the authors of these letters, but there can be no doubt that Combes' attention was now directed to the episcopacy, and future manifestations on the part of the higher clergy would not be ignored if sufficient grounds for retaliation could be found. Subsequent events of the fall and winter of 1902 substantiate this observation. Combes discovered an opportunity to take measures against the episcopacy in early October. As soon as Parliament reconvened that month, a petition on behalf of congregations whose authorization requests would shortly be deliberated was presented to the legislature. The document was signed by seventy-four of the eighty-seven bishops of France. Le Gaulois published the text of the petition and thereby ignited the most serious confrontation between the respective forces of church and state to that date in Combes' brief tenure of office. The document, remarkable for its terse eloquence, is worth quoting at some length:

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[1] Le Temps, 10 July 1902, p. 1.

[2] These letters protested the closing of schools opened before the promulgation of the Associations Law, which Combes had suppressed by means of a ministerial circular that did not require Loubet's signature.

[3] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6275, La protestation des évêques contre la suppression de l'enseignement congréganiste. Letter of the Bishop of Versailles to Loubet, Versailles, 23 July 1902.

[4] Ibid., Letter of the Bishop of Meaux to Loubet, Meaux, 29 July 1902; Letter of the Bishop of Belley to Loubet, Belley, 21 July 1902.

> All liberties are mutually interdependent; that of religious life implicates many others, and it may not be attacked without all liberties being simultaneously affected. The religious orders do not belong essentially to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but, born of evangelical councils, and organized by the Church herself to effect the decisions of the councils, they are one of the legitimate forms of the Church's expansion. Everywhere where their existence is not repressed, they appear. Thus, the liberty promised the Catholic Church by the Concordat implies the congregations' right to existence. It would, therefore, be vain to expect that the secular clergy and the episcopacy could, in the present circumstances, separate their cause from that of the regular clergy, which is the cause of the Church herself. . . . Our monks and nuns do not constitute an isolated caste whose destruction would affect only itself. They come from the very roots of this country; there is not a city, not a village, not a family which does not count one of its own among them. To attack these institutions would be to attack thousands of families in their hearts, to wound them in their most intimate feelings. . . .
>
> In regard to education, it is well known that recruitment of teachers is daily becoming more difficult in several departments, and that many state schools are harrassed by lack of personnel. . . . The education given in our religious schools cannot be termed political propaganda. The number and variety of students, a great many of whom come from notoriously republican families, would of itself be an obstacle to that. Experience has shown that it is neither in elementary school nor in high school, but only later, under other influences, and in other places, that political convictions are formed and solidified.
>
> The alleged interference of the religious orders and of the clergy in general in politics could never, in this generation and in this country, constitute a sufficiently grave danger to warrant sacrificing, along with the liberty and equality of all citizens before the law, the principles and indeed the very purpose of republican government. We

> avow it openly: public opinion is almost universally opposed to such clerical interference, and erects against it a barrier more effective than any legal or illegal repressions. . . .[1]

This petition bore the signatures of seventy-four prelates, a fact that attested to a surprising degree of unanimity in support of the ideas expressed therein. The large number of signatories, in addition to the fact that the document was in the form of a petition, led the government to view it as a collective episcopal manifesto expressly forbidden by the Organic Articles appended to the Concordat of 1801. Combes immediately decided to make an issue of this latest demonstration of episcopal concern for the congregations, and he notified all the signatories that the Council of State would be requested to decide whether the petition constituted an abuse of the hierarchy's concordatory prerogatives. A form letter to this effect, with further instructions calling for the signatories to present such defense and justification as they could, was sent to all concerned on October 24.[2] On that same day, Combes referred the issue to the Council of State and accompanied it with a brief resumé of the government's position on the case. It was decided to base the prosecution upon the fact that the collective nature of the petition infringed upon the Law of 18 Germinal of the Year X, which defined the nature and functions of the episcopacy. Combes wrote: "It seems to us that the joining of a large number of signatures to a document in which the signers claim to speak in the name of the episcopacy can only be the result of a concerted action by the latter; a result of prior deliberation." Article 4 of the Law of 18 Germinal expressly forbade such unauthorized deliberative assemblies of the clergy. "Doubtless," Combes continued,

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[1] Le Gaulois, 9 October 1902, p. 1.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6100, La pétition des évêques, 1902. Letter of Combes to the seventy-four bishops, Paris, 24 October 1902.

> it will be claimed that bishops, like other French citizens, have the privilege of petitioning Parliament. It is, moreover, this privilege that the signers invoke. . . . The government has absolutely no intention of contesting this right of petition which in effect does belong to every citizen. But is it as ordinary citizens that the signers of the aforementioned document have acted? It would be difficult to support this view. It is as cardinals, archbishops, and bishops that they have written and signed. They were careful to claim these qualities, and they allude to them throughout their "petition" . . . a reading of which suffices to demonstrate that it is the "Episcopacy," the "Church" addressing Parliament. This is not the exercise of the right of French citizens to petition. It is an episcopal manifesto, and it was indeed under this title that the document was first published and later qualified as a "petition."[1]

The Concordat recognized individual bishops and archbishops, not a collective episcopal corps, and the jurisdiction of each bishop was severely limited to his own diocese. Therefore, for a bishop to appeal on behalf of any monastic order not under his immediate jurisdiction also constituted a breach of prerogative. Combes asserted that the Direction of Cults viewed the episcopal petition as "the most serious attack ever delivered upon the Concordat."[2]

The Ministry of Cults eventually received seventy-two letters of justification from the signers of the petition. In general they reflected the tone and content of the letter written by the Archbishop of Albi, who disclaimed any intent of collective action, and termed the document "a simple letter, signed by several bishops and addressed to the members of Parliament." The right of citizens to petition Parliament was also invoked, as Combes had foreseen.[3]

To the surprise of no one, the Council of State dismissed the bishops' arguments and on November 27 issued a decree declaring that the signers of the petition had abused their powers and positions by having made specific use of

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1. Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6100, La pétition des évêques, 1902. Letter of Combes to the President of the Council of State, Paris, 24 October 1902.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., Letter of the Archbishop of Albi to Combes, Albi, 31 October 1902.

their titles and posing as defenders of religious orders outside their particular dioceses.[1] The Council explained its decision in a report sent to Combes the first of December. The argument formulated in this document graphically illuminated the philosophical and juridical chasm separating the state's view of the congregations from that held by the Church:

> The cause of the congregations is not the cause of the Church; the Concordat does not recognize the orders as forming a part of the established religious organization; indeed it clearly separates them from it. The Law of 18 Germinal of the Year X, re-establishing the Church, at the same time consummated the annihilation of the monastic establishments, associations, and congregations, dispersed and prohibited by laws of 1790 and 1792.[2]

Continuing, the report emphasized the illegal collective nature of the episcopal document:

> The bishops drew up a manifesto and all the concordatory legislation as well as our most ancient traditions of public law protest against this idea of an episcopacy united into a corps. There is no episcopal corps in France; the state is concerned only with individual bishoprics.[3]

In conclusion, the report noted: "Concerted action cannot be contested. The grouping of signatures, even the nature of the action prove it. The adherence of signatories was requested and received by special delegates who traveled from one diocese to another."[4]

Combes made no attempt to engage in reprisals against all the signers of the petition.[5] However, he was determined that the originators of the idea should be singled out for special punitive action if their complicity could be established. Five members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were subsequently suspended from the government payroll because of their activities during the month of October. The first to gain this unwelcome distinction was Mgr. Perraud, Cardinal Archbishop of Autun. Mgr. Perraud was a member of the Académie Française and ironically enough, it was his oratorical eloquence that got him into difficulties with the government. In October the diocese of Orléans had celebrated the centenary of Mgr. Dupanloup, a former bishop, and this event was well attended by members of the episcopacy.[1] Cardinal Perraud delivered a commemorative address in the Cathedral of Orléans on October 12. In his remarks, Mgr. Perraud declared, among other things, that the government's recent anticlerical activities amounted to tyranny, and he characterized the existing regime as "the government of depravity . . . endlessly striving to de-Christianize the nation while attempting to disguise all its blows against the Christian conscience under the fine name of freedom."[2] Combes learned of this address shortly after it was given,[3] but he did not officially act upon his information until the publication of Perraud's remarks on October 21. On that date, Perraud was requested to acknowledge the use of the words attributed to him,[1] and when the cardinal replied that he had indeed made the speech--with the disclaimer that he had not referred to the Combes government, but rather to "a general action of anti-religious propaganda"[2]--his salary was immediately suspended.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6100, Décret du Conseil d'Etat, 27 November 1902.

[2] Ibid., Rapport presenté au nom de la Section de l'Intérieur, des Cultes, de l'Instruction publique et des Beaux-arts par M. le conseilleur Saisset-Schneider (unpublished manuscript, undated), p. 3.

[3] Ibid., p. 6.

[4] Ibid., p. 10.

[5] La Libre Parole, 5 December 1902, p. 1. This paper reported that "Combes did not dare to suspend seventy-four bishops, but he had to throw a few of them to the Radical crocodiles." La Lanterne found the government's measures "derisory and insufficient," and asserted that all seventy-four bishops should have been suspended. (La Lanterne [Paris], December 1902, p. 1.)

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[1] Plans for the observances had been formulated in September, and the Bishop of Orléans had invited all the members of the episcopacy to attend. (L'Autorité, 28 September 1902, p. 1.)

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6136, Suppressions de traitement. "Discours prononcé dans le cathédrale de Ste. Croix d'Orléans, le 12 Octobre 1902 à l'occasion du premier centenaire de la naissance de Mgr. Dupanloup évêque d'Orléans," p. 4.

[3] Combes had professed interest in the "celebration at Orléans" even before Perraud made his speech. On October 11, the Premier had requested by telegram that the Prefect of the Department of Loiret send him details of the proceedings that would occur on the morrow, and in particular instructed the prefect to note the names and number of prelates present and whether there would occur any attempt to invite them to sign a "manifesto." (Telegram of Combes to the Prefect of the Department of Loiret, Paris, 11 October 1902, in ibid.)

Four other prelates received the same treatment as Cardinal Perraud, albeit for different reasons. Combes was quite convinced that the bishops' petition had in some way been discussed during the Dupanloup centenary celebration at Orléans. The bishops of Séez, Besançon, Orléans, and Nice were eventually singled out as the originators of the petition, but it is not at all clear upon what evidence the guilt of these prelates was determined.[3] Suspension of their respective salaries was decreed between December 4 and December 16 in form letters sent to all four prelates. These letters simply stated that "you personally concurred to establish the concert that the Council of State has declared abusive. The government has consequently decided that this infraction necessitates sanctions of another order in your case."[4] Mgr. Touchet, the Bishop of Orléans, vehemently protested his treatment, terming the government's punitive methods "a resurrection of the lettre de cachet."

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6136, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of Combes to Perraud, Paris, 21 October 1902.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Perraud to Combes, Autun, 23 October 1902.

[3] The Direction of Cults placed the greater share of the responsibility for promoting the petition upon Mgr. Touchet, Bishop of Orléans. Touchet was acquainted with this charge in a letter from Combes on December 11: "The investigation that I carried out establishes your responsibility--if not in the preparation of the document, at least in its propagation and in the collective form given the signatures . . . and moreover, you used your influence to augment the number of signatures." (Letter of Combes to Mgr. Touchet, Paris, 11 December 1902, in ibid.) Combes further accused Touchet of having received two telegrams in Latin, informing him that two of his colleagues gave their adherence to the petition. Touchet denied this charge. He replied: "I am ignorant of these telegrams; I received nothing, nor did I give any commission to receive these or any other despatches." (Letter of Touchet to Combes, Orléans, 15 December, in ibid.)

[4] Ibid., Letters of Combes to the four bishops, Paris, 4 December - 16 December 1902.

Touchet declared that the petition had been neither formulated nor discussed at Orléans, and denied that he had ever urged his colleagues to sign any such document.[1] To this letter, as well as to a subsequent one of January 1903, Combes specifically ordered that no reply be made. A year after the official closure of the incident, Mgr. Touchet was still protesting his innocence. In a letter to M. Dumay, the Director of Cults, Touchet again denied having composed a line of the petition and declared that he had never advised anyone else to sign it. "I did not even transmit the telegrams of adherence sent to me," he concluded, having apparently forgotten his previous denial of the receipt of such telegrams.[2]

Needless to say, suspension of a bishop's annual salary of 10,000 francs for an extended period of time could easily cause economic hardship if the bishop had no independent source of support. It was not unusual, however, for the faithful of the diocese to come to the aid of their prelate by subscribing funds for his benefit. This occurred in 1902, and in some instances, the donations reached sizeable proportions. It was reported that a subscription inaugurated for the benefit of Mgr. Perraud in October had amassed 30,000 francs by December, 1902.[3] Similar efforts were made on behalf of Mgr. Bardel, the Bishop of Séez, and this voluntary effort eventually appeared destined to equal the prelate's salary for a year.[4] As the number of public subscriptions increased to provide for all the bishops recently deprived of their incomes, the anticlerical press voiced indignation at the prospect of the prelates' thereby escaping the just punishment prepared for them by the government. La Lanterne charged that most of the donations had come from factory workers who subscribed not out of faith, but in order to avoid displeasing their employers.[1] Le Rappel accused the Bishop of Nice of sensationalism and avarice when he confessed his complicity in initiating the petition: "He wants to harvest the pity of the foolish faithful, the admiration of François Coppée, the praises of M. Drumont, and some money too—which is never disagreeable."[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6136, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of Touchet to Combes, Orléans, 15 December 1902.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Touchet to M. Dumay, Orléans, 14 October 1903.

[3] Le Temps, 10 December 1902, p. 2.

[4] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6136, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of the Prefect of the Department of Orne to Combes, Alençon, 14 December 1902.

The government was powerless to prevent or to defeat a public subscription. Combes therefore chose to ignore the question completely in 1902, but he resolved never to relax his adamant stand on the government's privilege of suspending ecclesiastical salaries. Even the passage of time and the emergence of new and more vexing issues failed to soften the Premier's attitude toward the bishops whom he had punished in 1902. In July 1903 the Prefect of the Department of Doubs suggested that the Archbishop of Besançon's salary be quietly restored in the hope that this conciliatory gesture would facilitate the implementation of decrees closing four religious schools in the diocese.[3] M. Dumay opposed this idea and Combes seconded him on the grounds that it would be bad policy to create the impression that the government was willing to buy the clergy's good will in such a manner.[4] Still later, when the prefect made another overture for the re-establishment of the prelate's salary at a time when Mgr. Petit was gravely ill,[1] Combes' reply was still negative and couched in stronger terms: "I have established as a general rule that no salary is to be restored without a request from the party concerned, expressing regret for the act which caused the disciplinary measure."[2]

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[1] La Lanterne, 23 December 1902, p. 1.

[2] Le Rappel (Paris), 21 December 1902, p. 1.

[3] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6136, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of the Prefect of the Department of Doubs to Combes, Besançon, 15 July 1903.

[4] Ibid., Note of M. Dumay, 21 July 1903.

Emile Combes' first six months in power had proven to be eventful from the standpoint of anticlerical activity, and this half year established a pattern that was to be characteristic of his entire administration. Combes' education decrees easily rank as the most controversial aspect of his anticlerical policy in 1902. The Premier's decision to close the illegal religious schools opened after the promulgation of the Associations Law had not stimulated much protest, but his wholesale suppression of the schools established prior to the law's passage did elicit response, for here the point could be made that the schools in question had been set up in accordance with legislation that was still valid. In all, the Premier had shown himself disposed to interpret the provisions of the Law of 1901 in a strict sense; this is well illustrated by his insistence that the employment of even a single member of a religious order in a private school was sufficient grounds for considering that school an unauthorized establishment of the religious order. Many were to find Combes' approach to these questions too intransigently legalistic, and indeed, the Premier in 1902 had not evidenced the slightest willingness to accommodate himself to a milder and less rigid interpretation of the law he had been called upon to enforce.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6136, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of the Prefect of the Department of Doubs to Combes, Besançon, 21 January 1904.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Combes to the Prefect of the Department of Doubs, Paris, 30 January 1904.

Combes' application of his decrees on education caused the most comment during his first half-year in office, and indeed his continued offensive against clerical influence in the schools was to dominate other anticlerical issues during his administration. In retrospect, however, it seems that Combes' most significant policy was the one he adopted toward the episcopacy and its manifestations of support for the regular clergy. His education decrees were at least founded in the discussions and debates that had produced the Associations Law, however personal his interpretation of those discussions might have been. But in his attitude toward the episcopacy, Combes was in a sense charting a new course in French politics that would eventually lead him into an unprecedented conflict with the higher clergy of France. To be sure, there had been other suppressions of salaries in previous administrations, but Combes appeared already to have concluded upon assuming power that the clergy itself, as well as clerical education, had usurped powers and prerogatives not legally its own, and that the Church, in all its varied manifestations, must be brought back into a more reasonable existence under a stricter interpretation of the Concordat of 1801. More than most, perhaps, Combes was inclined to view the clergy as primarily servants of the state—possessing to be sure a special nature and function that set them apart from ordinary civil servants, but functionaries all the same—and therefore subject to clearly established conventions and responsibilities that might not be ignored with impunity. The fact that the French episcopacy, after a prolonged period of apparent indifference to the fate of the religious orders, was coming to assume a larger role in the defense of the orders and of religious education, just when the government was becoming more jealous of its prerogatives and more determined not to tolerate what it considered the interference of the prelates in political matters, makes the situation in late

1902 all the more interesting. Combes' first clash with the bishops of France in the matter of the petition merely set the stage for future events. Neither party had emerged with any decisive gains from this initial conflict. It is not surprising, then, that it should not be the last.

Chapter VIII

COMBES' ENFORCEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATIONS LAW: THE ORDERS, THE PRESS, AND THE EPISCOPACY

Parliament reconvened on October 14, 1902, prepared to begin the work of deciding whether to accord authorization to the illegal religious orders. On the first day of the new session, the Combes government was interpellated by opposition deputies concerned equally about the legality and the consequences of Combes' education decrees of the past summer. The Premier chose to reply in a speech delivered on October 17. The basic question, Combes declared, was whether his decrees closing religious schools constituted a breach of the Associations Law. He asserted that the law was retroactive in regard to schools opened prior to July 1901 by unauthorized orders. The orders had tacitly recognized the law's retroactivity when they had submitted thousands of requests for the legalization of their other unauthorized establishments. Had it not been for the bad advice of some of their political friends, even more orders would have obeyed the law, instead of adopting an intransigent attitude as some had done. It could not be honestly maintained that the closure decrees were shocking or precipitous in nature; the congregations had been warned several times that authorization requests for their illegal establishments must be made.[1] In regard to complaints about the government's practice of padlocking the buildings formerly occupied by religious schools, Combes maintained that the right to close the establishments implied the duty of making sure that they remained closed. Moreover, the Premier asserted, padlocks were never placed on any property if the proprietor promised not to put the buildings to a prohibited use. Judicial intervention to close schools or to seal property was not required, for the Associations Law specifically reserved to the government, rather than to the courts, the prerogative of suppressing unauthorized religious establishments. Only schools had been affected by the decrees, and measures were already being implemented in order to accommodate any displaced pupils who might wish to attend public schools.[1] The opposition deputies found Combes' speech neither agreeable nor reassuring, and the session erupted into a turbulence so violent that President Léon Bourgeois had to threaten its suspension.

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laïque, pp. 98-99, 103. (Speech of 17 October 1902, Chamber of Deputies.)

Combes was unmoved by these hostile demonstrations. He could afford to be indifferent to the maneuvers of his opponents, for he was able to count upon the absolute support of the new Radical and Radical-Socialist majority in the Palais Bourbon. The precautions that Combes took in order to assure himself of this support reveal clearly that the Premier in no way thought of himself as a moulder of the Radical Party's ideology. Indeed, he was content to be simply the mouthpiece of Radicalism, rather than its heart or brain. It was the Premier's custom to summon the Radical chiefs to the Ministry of the Interior in order to consult with them upon delicate issues such as the recent education decrees. Without the assurance of their complete support and cooperation, Combes would never have undertaken a program of determined anticlerical action; according to his own testimony he would have relinquished his office rather than fly in the face of his Radical colleagues.[1] To a marked degree, then, Combes' position in the government often appeared to approximate that of executive secretary to the Radical bloc.

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laïque, pp. 107-108, 110-111, 113.

During the parliamentary vacances of 1902, Combes had carried out a detailed study of the legal status of a number of monastic establishments seeking authorization. These congregations numbered about four hundred; some two hundred others had voluntarily disbanded rather than submit to the requirements of the Associations Law. Parliament would have to consider these requests during the coming session, and the paper work and time required for dealing with each of the four hundred requests would be staggering. Combes therefore turned to the administrative decree of August 1901 for guidance as to the most expeditious procedure to follow. Because of his position on the Senate Associations Commission, Combes was entitled to a place on the commission charged with preparing the decree. He had declined to participate in the work of the Council of State, however, preferring to flee the heat of Paris and seek the quiet of Pons. Moreover, Combes avowed, he had not paid much attention to details of the text elaborated by the Council, and when the administrative decree had been published, he, like other parliamentarians, had scarcely taken heed of it.[2]

According to his own account, Combes was quite shocked when he first examined the administrative decree in the summer of 1902. He found Article 21 particularly perplexing: it authorized the Minister of Cults to present to Parliament formal bills either to accord, or to refuse, authorization. The Premier found this provision to be in conflict with Article 13 of the

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 58.

[2] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

Associations Law, which merely stated that bills to accord authorization should be prepared. As Combes observed, Article 13 "expressly stated that a congregation could not exist without legal authorization, but nowhere did it provide that a law was necessary to prevent it from existing."[1] The administrative decree appeared to reverse the natural order of relations between the congregations and the government. That is to say, a simple refusal to accord legal authorization--in the form of Parliament's rejection of an authorization bill--seemed sufficient to Combes. If a "negative law" of the sort required by the decree were indeed necessary, then Parliament's work would be automatically doubled. It would be a truly formidable task to have to prepare and vote upon bills both to accord and to refuse authorization.[2]

In view of the fact that Waldeck-Rousseau enjoyed a considerable reputation as a jurist, and because the former Premier had attached great importance to the formulation of the administrative decree, Combes was astonished that a legal contradiction of this magnitude should have been perpetrated under Waldeck's very eyes. But surprise soon gave way to suspicion, for Combes, like everyone else familiar with the circumstances surrounding the formulation and passage of the Associations Law, knew that Waldeck had been strongly opposed to requiring parliamentary rather than executive authorization. Perhaps his predecessor had cleverly chosen this underhanded means of inhibiting the full effects of the law's Article 13. "This would not be so incredible," Combes noted, "since he [Waldeck] had always maintained that the law was not intended to suppress the congregations *en masse*, but to bring the majority of them into line with our legislation."[1] As Combes interpreted it, the administrative decree condemned both cabinet and Parliament to virtual impotence, unless steps were immediately taken to change Article 21. The Premier considered broaching the question of revision to Waldeck-Rousseau, but the latter was away on an ocean cruise. M. Dumay, the Director of Cults, seemed the most likely person to consult at this juncture, so Combes brought the matter to his attention. Dumay confirmed Combes' suspicions by asserting that Waldeck had expressly commanded him to defend Article 21 before the Council of State, and had even prepared a three-page manuscript substantiating his views on the question. The Council of State had opposed the wording of Article 21, but had at length yielded to Waldeck's formal request for its adoption.[2] Combes next conferred with M. Faillières, President of the Senate and a long-time acquaintance. Faillières concurred with Combes' opinion about the constitutional difficulty posed by the wording of Article 21, and agreed that it conflicted with the intent of Article 13 of the law. He approved Combes' decision to seek redress from the Council of State.[3]

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[1] Combes, *Mon ministère*, p. 71.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Soon after these interviews, Combes summoned to his office M. Coulon, President of the Council of State. Coulon informed Combes that the Council of State had experienced serious misgivings about the wording of Article 21, and a number of Councillors had judged it to be in conflict with the intent of the Associations Law. Waldeck, however, had placed the utmost importance upon obtaining the formula, and the Council had yielded to his wishes, feeling that its stated objections covered its responsibility in the matter. Coulon

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1. Combes, Mon ministère, p. 73.

2. Ibid., p. 72.

3. Ibid., p. 74.

also reacted favorably to Combes' wish to obtain a revision of the article, but requested a delay until he could prepare his colleagues for the idea of reversing themselves.[1]

To be sure, Combes' decision to seek a revision of the administrative decree involved a certain element of risk. It might easily result in a rupture with Waldeck-Rousseau, painful for personal as well as political reasons. Combes disliked the prospect of providing the reactionary press with a convenient target in the form of a breach within republican ranks. Since no other course of action seemed justified, however, Combes resolved to push ahead and face the inevitable consequences of his action. "Waldeck-Rousseau harbored sentiments and intentions toward the religious orders that I did not share," he observed;

> therefore it seemed to me inevitable that conflict should arise between us, since I had become acquainted with the procedure so vigorously supported before--not to say imposed upon--the Council of State by the government's commissioners on the subject of authorization request procedures. . . . It would be necessary, in order to justify the reform [of Article 21] for me to demonstrate the constitutional error committed by Waldeck-Rousseau and endorsed by the Council of State. Would it not expose me, despite whatever reserves I should be able to establish, to opening a painful controversy over the origin and causes of that error? . . . When I disclosed to the Council of Ministers my discovery and my plan [for revision], the prevailing opinion was that . . . Waldeck-Rousseau had quite intentionally . . . adopted the defective formula for the sole purpose of neutralizing to a certain extent the effect of Article 13 of the law, by raising a difficult barrier before the steps of a too-ardently anticlerical government. Trouillot [who had been the Associations bill's reporter] even professed to see in the formula a return by Waldeck to the original provisions of Article 13, changes in which had been forced upon him by the Associations Commission after a spirited resistance on his part.[2]

Because he dreaded the unpleasant repercussions that must occur should

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[1] Combes, *Mon ministère*, p. 74. Unfortunately, the Waldeck-Rousseau papers contain neither references nor documents that might shed light upon Waldeck's role in formulating the decree.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Trouillot's conjecture prove true and become public knowledge, Combes sought for some means of achieving the dual objective of revising the administrative decree while at the same time avoiding a controversy that would profit only the opposition. He hit upon the idea of referring the wording of the administrative decree to the Associations Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, without bringing to that body's attention Waldeck's role in sponsoring the defective formula. The commission could then formally request Combes to have the decree modified by obtaining a new ruling from the Council of State. This plan, somehow rather characteristic of Combes' flair for intrigue, was eventually effected. The revised version of Article 21 provided that authorization requests should be submitted either to the Senate or to the Chamber of Deputies. It was understood that a refusal to discuss the authorization bills, or a rejection of such bills, would constitute an unequivocal denial of legal authorization without further delay or recourse to a second bill to refuse authorization.[1]

One of the major problems attendant upon legislative authorization concerned the procedure to be followed in preparing the requisite bills. Opponents of Article 13 of the Associations Law had made dire predictions of burdensome amounts of work made inevitable by that article's provision for legislative, rather than executive, action. Now that the issue had materialized nearly two years after the parliamentary debates on the law, Combes found that preparing an individual bill for each congregation did indeed appear to impose a formidable amount of purely clerical work upon the legislature. Accordingly, the Premier resolved to reduce and simplify Parliament's task by arranging the congregations seeking authorization into three broad categories: teaching orders, preaching orders, and the commercial order of La Grande Chartreuse. Combes decided that the government would request a refusal of authorization of all three categories, and a bill for each category, with the name of a congregation constituting one article of the bill, could be easily prepared and rejected by the Chamber of Deputies. Meanwhile, Combes planned to introduce in the Senate bills favoring the legalization of orders to whose demands he was sympathetic. There were only six or seven of these (they were engaged in charitable work), while the congregations to be refused authorization numbered some four hundred.[1] Looking back upon his procedure after leaving office, Combes stated that in perspective it still seemed the best one possible, except that experience had taught him that even the orders whose legalization he had favored did not deserve his benevolence. "Experience," he wrote,

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 76-77.

> has taught me that passions foreign to the religious spirit animate all the congregations, from first to last, whatever their nature. It has taught me that all of them, without exception, disguise beneath the veil of piety or charity suggestions of the most intolerant fanaticism and inculcate in the hearts of all their members a hatred of our modern society, and of its institutions and its laws.[2]

By March 1903 Combes was ready to submit to the Chamber of Deputies his bills pertaining to the unauthorized teaching orders. The government's policy in regard to these congregations had aroused strong criticism on two counts: first, it was maintained that refusing to allow their members to teach constituted a violation of "freedom of education," and second, that the government's procedure of lumping together the requests made by the teaching orders was, if not illegal, certainly not in line with accepted parliamentary practice and quite contrary to the spirit of the Associations Law.[3] In a

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1. Combes, _Mon ministère_, pp. 77-78.

2. _Ibid._, p. 78.

3. _Le Figaro_, 22 February 1903, p. 1; _Le Gaulois_, 1 March 1903, p. 1.

much-applauded speech before the Chamber of Deputies, Combes replied at some length to these charges. He denied that there existed an inviolable constitutional "right to teach" comparable to the rights of free speech or of peaceful assembly. Because of its special role in the indoctrination of citizens, education was of vital concern to the state, and was therefore subject to certain restrictions in every country. "There is every justification for the state to forbid the right to teach either to individuals, or to aggregations, whose doctrines and interests are in absolute opposition to the fundamental doctrines and general interests of which the state is guardian," Combes averred.[1] He requested wholesale refusal of authorization to the teaching orders on the grounds that "their existence alone constitutes an anomaly in a political and social organization founded upon the principles of the Revolution."[2]

In a subsequent speech, Combes explained why he wished to deny the unauthorized preaching orders the right to exist. The prerogative of preaching was specifically reserved by French legislation to the concordatory clergy. Allowing the regular clergy to exercise this function constituted an encroachment upon the special domain of the parish clergy. Monks, Combes asserted, were especially prone to preach against republican ideals and institutions. These considerations alone appeared to justify a wholesale rejection of their orders' requests.[3]

Debate on the authorization of congregations consumed a great portion of Parliament's time and energy for a period of months. It does not seem necessary to treat these parliamentary discussions in detail since they proved in most cases to be very similar to the debates of 1901 upon the validity or utility of monastic orders in modern society. It is interesting to note that the procedure for presenting authorization bills to Parliament involved designating a reporter for each bill, and that each article of a bill named a single congregation to be authorized. In this way, a great number of congregations could be dealt with in a single bill; for example, one bill was prepared with eighty-one articles, each article naming a single women's teaching congregation. As Combes had intended, it was a simple matter for the Chamber to refuse authorization _en bloc_ by refusing to pass to a discussion of the bill's articles.[1] Though this procedure blocked time-consuming discussions of the merits of individual congregations, there was debate on each bill when it was presented to the Chamber. Needless to say, the reports prepared for the authorization bills were on the whole unfavorable; this is scarcely surprising in light of the fact that the reporter for a number of bills in the Chamber was Fernand Rabier, one of the most determined of anticlericals, and the President of the Senate Commission on Congregations was Georges Clemenceau.[2]

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laïque, p . 183. (Speech of 19 March 1903, Chamber of Deputies.)

[2] Ibid., p. 194.

[3] Ibid., pp. 225, 227, 231. (Speech of 26 March 1903, Chamber of Deputies.)

Despite its formidable anticlerical armament, the government felt a twinge of uncertainty about the outcome of the authorization debates initiated in March, 1903. Combes decided to make _en bloc_ rejection a question of confidence in order to enforce discipline among the majority groups, and an enquiry was initiated in order to ascertain the temper of all sections of parliamentary opinion. The report resulting from this investigation indicated that the cabinet could count upon the absolute and unqualified support of the Socialists, Radicals, and Radical-Socialists. It was remarked, however, that defection might occur among other groups which customarily supported Combes, and the report concluded by stating that a number of pro-Combes politicians were annoyed by the decision to make bloc refusal a question of confidence, because they would have preferred to spin out the debates by voting separately upon each request for authorization.[1] The debates drew large crowds to the Palais Bourbon; dramatic incidents were anticipated, but they failed to materialize. Veteran observers reported an unprecedented amount of behind the scenes bargaining and the opposition carried on heavy corridor politicking.[2] Events proved, however, that the government had little to fear from its opponents in 1903, and as the debates progressed, Combes encountered little difficulty in obtaining wholesale denials of authorization for the three categories of orders. The four-hundred-odd congregations eventually refused authorization were notified of Parliament's decision by a form letter and the superiors of their parent houses were likewise informed. The government requested immediate closure of these establishments.[3]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^7, Archives du Ministère de l'Intérieur. Box 12393^b, Culte Catholique, Loi du 1er juillet, 1901-1906.

[2] _Ibid._

Combes found it necessary to make several speeches as the debates progressed. On the basis of his statements it is possible to determine whether the Premier possessed an anticlerical philosophy and if so, what elements constituted its essential doctrines. In his early speeches, Combes'

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1. Arch. Nat. F^7, Archives du Ministère de l'Intérieur. Note, M. 535, "Le débat sur les congrégations," 11 March 1903.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., F^{19} 6268, Lois et décrets sur les congrégations.

marked hostility to the principle of clerical education had been clearly evident, and the chief source of that hostility apparently reposed in the Premier's conviction that education administered by the regular clergy amounted to an indoctrination of French youth with ideas inimical to republican virtues. Scarcely an original argument, this thesis had been advanced with greater cogency and eloquence by Waldeck-Rousseau, and by any number of other "republican" orators. Therefore Combes can scarcely be considered an innovator in anticlericalism, though it might validly be maintained that the general tenor of his language was more acerbic than that of his predecessor. Combes' attitude toward the preaching orders reflects some intransigence, but here he was careful to base his opposition on legal or concordatory grounds. Like Waldeck, Combes felt that utility and service must be of supreme importance in determining whether to favor requests for authorization. On the surface, at least, Combes' anticlerical program had the appearance of rationality and if it cannot be dignified with the title of an anticlerical philosophy, it must be admitted that the program and the ideas possessed a certain unity and cohesiveness.

It is nevertheless true that in virtually every speech Combes made on the religious issue in 1903, there are evidences, hints, intimations of something other than a perfectly objective approach to the question of the orders. For example, in June the Premier spoke in justification of his decision not to favor authorization for the Order of Dom Bosco. Combes began calmly enough by criticizing the order's alleged wealth (over three million francs), complaining about its "cosmopolitan makeup," and condemning its lack of a "mystic ideal" as a foundation for its existence. These were perhaps valid points, but Combes spoke with much greater passion and conviction when he concluded with the assertion that "at the present time, the religious congregations are pure anachronisms. They are as much in contradiction with the tendencies of our natures as they are with the general ideas current in our minds."[1]

In August, Combes spoke at Saintes (Charente-Inférieur). Referring to the cabinet's anticlerical program and the opposition it had encountered, the Premier stated:

> [We are engaged in] a combat without quarter, not between men, but between principles. I am resolved to pursue it to the end, until the republican spirit finally triumphs over the clerical spirit. . . . All republicans have an obligation to form a resolute and compact mass against their adversaries . . . and energetically support the government in its firm determination progressively to realize the reforms so long promised the country . . .[2]

At the Breton village of Tréguier, for the dedication of a statue of Renan, he said:

> We would have been remiss in our duty if we had tolerated any longer the existence of these foyers of moral insurrection against the Republic. . . . It is not religion that we attack, but its ministers, who wish to make it an instrument of domination. . . . All that we ask of religion . . . is that it confine itself to its temples, limit itself to the instruction of the faithful, and refrain from all interference in the civil and political domains. We have entered into battle with its ministers because they have intentionally abused the essential character of their mission, which is exclusively spiritual; because they aim at removing themselves from the supervision of our society.[3]

These pronouncements were designed to appeal to anticlerical prejudices and perhaps consequently ought not to be unduly emphasized when evaluating Combes' anticlerical philosophy. Yet there is an element in Combes' words that sometimes smacks of fanatical intolerance not merely of the congregations' teaching or preaching activities, but also of the spiritual and emotional drives symbolized by the congregations themselves. There is evident a fundamental lack of sympathy and understanding for the human needs that monasticism attempted to satisfy. Such intolerance and lack of sympathy could prove dangerous in a man responsible for formulating and implementing policies designed to effect sweeping changes in the religious structure of a nation.

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laïque, pp. 304, 305-308, 310. (Speech of 3 July 1903, Chamber of Deputies.)

[2] Ibid., pp. 342, 344. (Speech of 23 August 1903, Saintes.)

[3] Ibid., pp. 352, 354. (Speech of 13 September 1903, Tréguier.)

Yet it must be observed that in 1903, despite his indiscriminate attacks upon certain categories of unauthorized religious orders, Emile Combes had not attempted to pursue a blindly fanatical anticlerical policy. And despite his avowed determination to push "to the limit" in his campaign to ensure the triumph of "the republican spirit," the Premier obviously did not envision the abrogation of the Concordat as the limit of which he spoke. In January, a certain Deputy Allard, a member of the coalition supporting the cabinet, contending that spiritual ideas were unnecessary and undesirable, had made the time-honored proposal that the ecclesiastical budget be suppressed. The Radical Party took up Allard's proposal and sponsored it as a formal resolution. Combes, like Waldeck, opposed this resolution and made a speech which he subsequently referred to as his "spiritualistic declaration of faith." This speech is worthy of examination at some length for in it Combes voiced sentiments notable not merely for their idealism, but also for the insight they afford into the man's character and ideology. Combes said:

> The question raised presently is not one that can be treated during a budgetary discussion. If you suppress the ecclesiastical budget in an improvised vote, you will cast the country into the greatest embarrassment imaginable, which would affect not merely the consciences that your vote would alarm, but would also place the Republic in real danger. A people does not vainly nourish religious ideals for centuries in order that other, contrary ideals be suddenly substituted for them in a single day by majority vote. You cannot wipe away the past fourteen centuries by a stroke of the pen. Before destroying, it is your duty first to ask yourselves with what you will

> replace that which you destroy.
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> I respect the ideas of my predecessor at the tribune, but I cannot believe that the majority--no, nearly the unanimity--of Frenchmen could be content like him with simple moral ideals presently given in the superficial and limited education of our primary schools. For a man to be able to face the difficulties of life with these ideals, they would have to be extended, elevated and completed by an education that you have not yet created and that you must create before you can think of repudiating the moral teachings given until now.
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> When we took office, though several among us were theoretically partisans of the separation of church and state, we disclosed that we would hold to the concordatory terrain. Why? Because we consider necessary ideas the moral ideas provided by the churches, and except for the primary schools, the churches alone provide them. For my part, it is with difficulty that I can conceive of a society composed of philosophers like M. Allard, whose primary education would have sufficiently fortified them against the perils of life.[1]

Combes stated that he was opposed to submitting the issue of suppression of the ecclesiastical budget to a popular referendum, terming such procedure "a convenient means of shifting our own responsibility upon others," but significantly, he approved a proposal for the creation of a special commission to study the question of suppression.[2]

Combes' words were greeted with approbation by the moderates and conservatives, but the Radical and Socialist side of the Chamber startled the Premier by interrupting his speech with cries and hisses. Combes confessed that he lost some of his aplomb at this unexpected demonstration of hostility from his supporters.[3] For several days following the incident, relations between the Premier and a considerable part of his majority were decidedly cool. Combes found this situation intolerable and took steps to remedy it. His haste to reassure the extremists at this time, coupled with some of his pronouncements about solidarity and cooperation among the leftist groups are revealing of Combes' conception of his personal role in the cabinet.

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laique, pp. 168-170. (Speech of 26 January 1903, Chamber of Deputies.)

[2] Ibid., pp. 170-171.

[3] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 86.

On February 4, Combes spoke to the Chamber of Deputies on the education budget, and he availed himself of this opportunity to clear up the misunderstanding his previous speech had generated. He denied that he had meant to imply that the morality of the laic school was in itself insufficient, and termed such morality as "the more solid for being independent of all dogma, the more noble for being uniquely derived from eternal and necessary ideas of justice, duty, and right."[1] Having made peace with his extremist supporters, Combes subsequently showed little inclination to depart from a spirit of close cooperation with all elements of the Délégation des Gauches. In an August speech at Marseilles, Combes bluntly and frankly stated his views on the necessity of perfect cohesion among the groups that composed the majority bloc:

> I agreed to lead the government only in view of this express condition of union. I have several times declared, and shall continue to do so at every suitable opportunity, that on the day when this unity ceases to exist, when for any reason whatsoever, one of the coalition groups resumes its freedom of action, I shall immediately give up power and return to the ranks.[2]

In October, Combes was present for a dedication of a statue of Vercingetorix at Clermont-Ferrand and referred again to the existence of a majority which had made possible the government's program and with which Combes identified republican sentiment. As Combes saw the situation late in 1903, there were no alternatives to the government's anticlerical program:

> It is necessary to choose between the achievement of the program already underway or the inauguration of an opposite program; between

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laique, p. 175. (Speech of 4 February 1903, Chamber of Deputies.)

[2] Ibid., p. 333. (Speech of 8 August 1903, Marseilles.)

> the continuation of the entente among the leftist groups or the establishment of a new grouping in which the ralliés and the nationalists would be the chief ornaments. . . .
>
> Perhaps I have a conception of the role of Premier that is not very flattering to certain persons' vanities. But I cannot easily conceive of the idea of a Premier who simply takes the republican majority where he pleases without giving it some preliminary indication of his desires and views. . . . Republican government is impossible without this entente, this accord, between the minister and his majority. . . . I do not concern myself a great deal about whether it is the cabinet which leads or is led, when it applies the program decided upon.[1]

Essentially this political philosophy was constituted of the conceptions and convictions Combes had espoused upon assuming office in 1902. But by the close of 1903 Combes had become even more committed to his belief in the necessity of the left-wing bloc's continued existence. Perhaps the Premier had also become more dedicated to his peculiar conception of his own role in relation to that bloc. Be that as it may, these extensive references to Combes' words will serve to illustrate the difficulty, already encountered in the case of Waldeck-Rousseau, of differentiating between policies personally advocated by the Premier and those imposed upon him by the exigencies of holding together a parliamentary majority. There is little reason to doubt, however, that the measures taken against the teaching and preaching orders in 1903 reflect Combes' personal and deep-seated convictions about the proper fate to be meted out to the congregations. Wholesale suppression of these categories accorded as well with Combes' views as with those of extreme anticlericals. Only in the matter of suppressing the ecclesiastical budget (leading as it must to an abrogation of the Concordat) was there any evidence of disharmony between Combes and his supporters, and this cannot be considered of a serious nature since it affected only the most intransigent wing of anticlerical opinion.

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[1] Combes, Une campagne laïque, pp. 378, 385. (Speech of 10 October 1903, Clermont-Ferrand.)

It has seemed essential to examine at length various aspects of Combes' anticlerical philosophy and his conception of his own political position the better to understand the events that were to occur later in 1903. By the spring of that year, the anticlerical campaign in Parliament had perceptibly broadened from its original concern with debating the unauthorized monastic orders' right to existence. Intimations of this expansion had come first with the Radical Party's resolution favoring suppression of the ecclesiastical budget. It will be recalled that although Combes had formally opposed suppression in January, he had not objected to the creation of a special parliamentary commission to study the question. Though nothing came of it at the time, the issue was revived later and in May Combes was approached by a group of Radical-Socialist leaders including deputies Hubbard, Rabier, and Massé, who informed the Premier that it was the party's wish that steps be taken immediately for a denunciation of the Concordat.[1] Combes' response to this overture was not reported, but when, on May 21, M. Hubbard abruptly arose to move in the Chamber of Deputies that the Concordat be abrogated and church and state separated, Combes declined to support the resolution to the extent of making it a question of confidence.[2] *Le Gaulois* believed Combes' lack of support to be decisive in the failure of Hubbard's motion, opining that the resolution would have carried if Combes had made it a question of confidence. Nevertheless, *Le Gaulois* failed to derive much comfort from this temporary setback to the extreme anticlericals, pointing out that Combes' present conviction on this question could scarcely be regarded as permanent:

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[1] *L'Action* (Paris), 19 May 1903, p. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, 22 May 1903, p. 1.

"We are at the mercy not of a change of opinion, but a change of tactics on the part of a minister who already has accommodated his spiritualist philosophy to so many different and contradictory sources," the paper sourly observed.[1]

Combes' lack of enthusiasm for abrogating the Concordat aroused the displeasure of the anticlerical organs of opinion and he was taken to task by several of them. L'Action asserted that a majority favoring immediate separation of church and state already existed, if only Combes had the courage to utilize it and exercise leadership over it.[2]

In June the proponents of separation gained a victory of sorts with the formation of a parliamentary Commission on the Separation of Church and State. The creation of the commission did give concrete recognition to the existence of organized opinion favoring separation, but its composition, determined by election within the Chamber of Deputies, left much to be desired from the extreme anticlerical point of view. The commission was composed of 33 members; according to a tabulation compiled by La Libre Parole, 17 members were favorable to separation, 15 were opposed, and one member was favorable to the principle of separation but wished to submit the question to a referendum. The Radical-Socialists had 9 seats, the Socialists 7, the Union Démocratique 1, while the opposition numbered 7 Progressists and 8 nationalists or conservatives. La Libre Parole predicted that with so close a division of opinion, the commission would not produce any significant work.[3] Le Temps was inclined to concur with this forecast concerning the utility of the commission. "If this vote has any significance, it is clearly hostile to the realization of separation bills," *Le Temps* observed. It was further noted that a majority of the commission was drawn from only two parties of Combes' majority: Socialist and Radical-Socialist. The Union Démocratique elected only one member and the Gauche Radicale none. Apparently, *Le Temps* reasoned, these two important groups had disinterested themselves in the question. The Union Démocratique had even announced that separation was not part of its program and that a majority of the group considered discussion of the question premature.[1]

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[1] Le Gaulois, 2 June 1903, p. 1.

[2] L'Action, 24 May 1903, p. 1.

[3] La Libre Parole, 12 June 1903, p. 1. (M. Hubbard was not elected to the commission.)

The anticlerical press, on the other hand, expressed approval at the election of the commission and optimism at its prospects for productive work. *L'Action* printed an article by Georges Hubbard, who criticized Combes for moving too slowly, and who predicted that "the Concordat is torn up from this first vote."[2] Aristide Briand, who had been elected reporter of the commission, was quoted as saying that "yesterday the government was concordatory; today it is obliged to march with long strides toward the denunciation of the Concordat. . . . It is a very serious victory from the political viewpoint. Now the question has been posed. It only remains to draw the natural consequences from it. You may count upon us for that."[3] In an article entitled "Première réponse," Jean Jaurès viewed the creation of the commission as a first, though not necessarily decisive, step toward separation. "Those republicans who refuse to vote for an immediate separation will surely be led to declare that in their eyes it remains a future solution. The idea, once current, will grow."[1] Georges Clemenceau also voiced his approval of the direction the anticlerical campaign had taken, though he was critical of Combes' hesitancy. Far from being discouraged at the smallness of the anticlerical majority on the commission, Clemenceau regarded the existence of any majority at all as significant evidence of anticlerical progress during the past twenty years.[2]

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[1] *Le Temps*, 13 June 1903, p. 1.

[2] *L'Action*, 12 June 1903, p. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*

The parliamentary anticlerical events of 1903—blanket refusals of authorization to teaching and preaching orders, and raising the separation issue—generated some public outcry, though perhaps not as much as might have been anticipated. In certain areas Combes was the recipient of some personal vilification, while in others such as La Rochelle, he was cheered upon making a public appearance.[3] Combes himself referred to his speaking tour in the summer and fall of 1903 as "a triumphal march" and obviously drew encouragement from personal contacts with the people of France. The Premier recorded that at Marseilles he was welcomed by a crowd of 20,000, a better reception than had been accorded President Loubet on a recent visit. "The people instinctively felt that in acclaiming me, they were acclaiming in my person democracy and truth," Combes modestly wrote. He was surprised by the numbers of women who came to hear his speeches in Marseilles and was more than astonished at being kissed by some ten of them at the conclusion of his remarks. Combes' reception in Brittany, where he was carrying on a running feud with the Bishop of Quimper throughout 1903, and where Catholicism was thought to be especially strongly rooted, proved also to be a pleasurable surprise. There had been concern in some official quarters for the Premier's safety in journeying to Tréguier to speak, but a preliminary investigation disclosed only that a few demonstrations were planned by the opposition. Combes reminisced with obvious pleasure over the lack of hostility his entourage encountered on the Breton tour, and attributed it to a reaction in his favor generated by the pronounced opposition carried on prior to his arrival by the Church and the "feudality."[1]

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[1] La Petite République (Paris), 13 June 1903, p. 1.

[2] L'Aurore (Paris), 14 June 1903, p. 1.

[3] Arch. Nat. F^7, Archives du Ministère de l'Intérieur. Box 12393^e, Statistiques départementales. This file is composed of reports of Police Commissioners to the Intérieur Sûreté-générale.

[4] Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 125-135.

So far as the pamphlet and polemical press was concerned, the newly raised question of separation easily overshadowed the issue of suppressing the teaching and preaching orders. It must be admitted that the general tone of both anticlericals and clericals had not changed since the polemic over the congregations had begun in 1899, and the war of words was waged as fiercely and as fruitlessly as in the past. In general, the pamphlets that broached the topic of separation took one of three positions: some attempted to view the issue dispassionately and evaluated the consequences for both church and state; some took an intensely emotional stand in favor of separation as necessary for the Republic's safety, and others, equally emotional, denounced separation as a manifestation of an anticlerical government's desire to impose its own will without regard for the wishes of Frenchmen. One proponent of separation argued the issue quite rationally from the economic viewpoint, looking forward to a future when every religious group in France would pay its own expenses, without any being favored by the state. Separation would relieve the government of its old preoccupation with religious affairs and leave it free to attend to the interests of the people. Rumors to the effect that separation would result in governmental suppression of priests and the priesthood were false, and were designed to obscure the real issues.[1] The author failed to deal with any of the difficult social and property problems that separation was bound to raise, and no doubt his simplified presentation, which made it seem as though separation were an uncomplicated process to be achieved upon the passage of a parliamentary act, left many skeptical.

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 128-129, 138.

A certain Abbé Planeix evidenced a similar proclivity for oversimplification, albeit he approached the question from the opposite standpoint. In his view, two parties in France were in conflict: the party of those who prayed and the party of those who did not pray. The men of prayer would prevail in the end. Discouragement in the face of tribulation was a guilty weakness, absolutely illogical in light of the fact that Catholics were perfectly aware of the goodness and imperishability of their faith. The good abbé was of the opinion that anticlericalism was subsiding in France; intellectuals no longer took it seriously and the people as a whole were tired of it. Action--speaking out against persecution, claiming rights--and evangelization--talking to "the people--these were the courses of action open to the Catholics of France if they wished to preserve the Church.[2] The impression gained from a reading of this pamphlet, and many others like it, was that French Catholics were a persecuted minority within a Protestant or heathen state. Such an unrealistic view of the plight of the Church in France, actually including as it did the vast majority of Frenchmen, most of them apparently too apathetic or too indifferent to rise to its defense, could scarcely be productive of fruitful results.

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[1] Elie Pécaut, La séparation des églises et de l'état (Paris, 1903), pp. 5, 9, 14.

[2] Abbé Planeix, Le découragement des catholiques (Paris, 1903), pp. 37, 56-58.

Many writers gave vent to emotional or hysterical outbursts centering around ancient questions such as the debt that the state owed the Church, or the obscurantism that sprang from organized Christianity, and then proceeded to air their pet grievances about the ills of religion or of government. In all the verbal smoke generated by the battle of words, one or two lucid and realistic appraisals were made, though it is impossible to gauge what impression, if any, they made. It was noted by one clerical writer that the general principle of separation was not incompatible with the doctrine and practice of the Church, but the issue, as presented to the public in 1903, had been so dangerously simplified that the basic considerations precluding a separation had been obscured. Any arrangements made would have to be of a contractual rather than of a unilateral nature, and would of necessity have to deal with certain essential questions. First, provision would have to be made for the support of Catholic ministers of worship. It was suggested that the existing ecclesiastical budget handling clergymen's salaries and expenses be transformed into perpetual and inalienable rentes accruing to the clergy. Second, a new property settlement was necessary. Ecclesiastical property should be registered in the name of the commune or department, and usage or usufruct must be registered in the name of a Catholic association of worship. Third, new arrangements would have to be devised for the nomination of ecclesiastical personnel. Recruitment of the lower clergy would be carried on without state supervision or interference. For the higher clergy, at each vacancy, three names would be submitted by the Church to the President of the Republic, who could indicate a preference between two and absolutely veto one. Appointment of ecclesiastical titularies would be the exclusive prerogative of the Pope. The author believed this to be a workable proposal that would result in a contractual separation involving a simple division of properties based upon mutual respect.[1] In reality, one wonders if these proposals, once implemented, would actually have resulted in a true separation of church and state. The general tone of the pamphlet leads to the conclusion that a modification of the Concordat, rather than an abrogation of it, was what the author had in mind. His proposals in regard to ecclesiastical nomination especially bear out this contention.

An anticlerical proponent of separation likewise made some proposals notable for their rationality and lack of vindictiveness, and which merit brief examination. He advocated the old concept of "free churches in a free state," a traditional anticlerical slogan. The clergy must have independence and security which would be attained by an immediate transformation of the ecclesiastical budget into civil pensions for the existing clergy. This budget des retraites would gradually amortize itself as its beneficiaries died off, and the state would eventually be free of subsidizing any cult.[2] The religious orders of the Catholic Church, having no legal basis, would disappear completely after separation.[3] The clergy would be paid by religious associations organized by canton, commune, or department. These associations would also rent the property used for religious purposes; under no circumstances would such religious associations be permitted to own property. Religious services must be held only in places specifically designated for that purpose by the state, and such places of worship might be used for religious purposes only. The clergy would be subject to common law like all other French citizens.[1] Though not exactly draconic, this conception of separation was certainly less than generous from the Church's point of view, and its denial of the Church's right to have monastic orders implied that the Church would not be absolutely free after separation had been effected.

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[1] Severin de la Chapelle, Une condition juridique (Guingamp, 1903), pp. 6, 10-14.

[2] A. André, La séparation des églises et de l'état (Alençon, 1903), p. 118.

[3] Ibid., p. 129.

Of the great number of articles, pamphlets, and books that appeared in 1903, only a very few can be considered here. One anonymous pamphlet viewed the whole separation question as part of a vast masonic conspiracy foisted upon unsuspecting Frenchmen by a parliament subservient to directives emanating from the Grand-Orient. The purpose of the separation campaign was the seizure of Catholic properties for the enrichment of politicians.[2] Another pamphlet viewed Combes as the logical heir to the mantle of Renan. Renan had made a mere man of Christ and had undermined the faith of France; Combes' work of destroying religion in France was possible because of Renan's corrosive teachings.[3] An anticlerical writer was unimpressed by the Church's complaint of governmental persecution. He regarded it as being part of an ancient grievance carefully cherished and nourished by clericals, traditionally brought forth whenever the state envisioned measures of religious reform: "This is not the first time that the heirs of the Inquisition and the disciples of the Syllabus have accused the Republic of violating liberty. The tune sometimes varies; the words are always the same."[4] All the government's anticlerical measures could be justified in terms of the Concordat and the Organic Articles. Indeed, the government had never even used the full array of legal armament available to it under long-established legal principles and traditions; Combes could pursue a considerably stricter campaign against recalcitrant bishops and unauthorized orders and still be within the law.[1] And so the polemic continued, usually generating more heat than light.

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[1] André, La séparation des églises et de l'état, pp. 169-171.

[2] Anon., Le complot maçonnique (Annecy, 1903), pp. 5-6.

[3] L.-A Gaffre, L'apothéose du déserteur (Dijon, 1903), pp. 13, 48.

[4] Victor Jouy, L'église est-elle persecutée? (Quimper, 1903), p. 3.

Of more serious concern to the government than pamphlet polemics was the attitude of the French episcopacy to the new turn taken by the anticlerical campaign in 1903. It was difficult to gauge the higher clergy's collective frame of mind, but as usual, there were outspoken bishops who either published articles or allowed themselves to be quoted in the clerical press. Le Gaulois conducted an inquiry among selected members of the hierarchy in June, and published the results of this investigation over a period of several days. L'Eclair and La Verité Française carried on similar investigations. The statements attributed to the bishops were on the whole unfavorable to the principle of separation of church and state. Mgr. Le Camus, Bishop of La Rochelle, summed up the position of the more energetic part of the episcopacy when he deplored a possible separation but subsequently observed: "If the Concordat cannot be honestly and loyally kept in practice, then its definitive suppression is the only solution. Enough of servitude! Let us end it."[2] Others, more conservative, echoed Mgr. Mignot, Archbishop of Albi, who stated that "abrogation of the Concordat would be a grave misfortune." The prelate shrewdly asserted that it was most unlikely that the government would disinterest itself in religious questions after separation, and with the Concordat gone, the Church would possess no guarantees against the state.[1] The interrogation undertaken by L'Eclair was inaugurated by an editorial observation to the effect that the French bishops had preserved a commendable silence while waiting for the Vatican to assume the initiative against a usurping state. The Vatican's "incomprehensible" inactivity in this regard would cause the bishops to speak out in the Church's defense.[2] The newspaper's purpose in conducting its inquiry among the bishops was designed expressly for the purpose of goading the hierarchy into taking a definite stand on this vital question. Mgr. Pelge, Bishop of Poitiers, was criticized when he declined to respond on the grounds of ill health, and when Mgr. Schoeper of Tarbes replied that he favored "leaving the issue to the consideration of the Holy See," he was taken severely to task for refusing to commit himself.[3]

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[1] Jouy, L'église est-elle persecutée?, p. 11.

[2] L'Eclair (Paris), 25 May 1903, p. 1.

These attempts to force the hand of the episcopacy were ill-conceived and poorly timed, for the government, always suspicious of the attitude of the higher clergy on critical issues, was becoming more and more intransigent in its dealings with ecclesiastics whom it considered to be actively opposing its anticlerical policies. The Ministry of Cults compiled a lengthy dossier devoted exclusively to reports from prefects and other departmental officials on the attitude of the episcopacy toward the suppression of congregational education and toward separation of church and state. No incident or word was considered too insignificant or too trivial to escape notice and comment. Virtually every diocese of France was included in this file. The Combes

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1. Le Gaulois, 2 June 1903, p. 1.
2. L'Eclair, 25 May 1903, p. 1.
3. Ibid., 1 September 1903, p. 1.

government expected to be able to use this material as evidence in its case against ecclesiastical "meddling" in politics.[1]

In March 1903, Mgr. Delamaire, Bishop of Perigueux was suspended from the government payroll after having violently denounced Combes' religious policies in a letter to his diocesan clergy. Though the conservative press sprang to Delamaire's defense, Le Temps had this sound observation to make, which subsequent events were to bear out: "To criticize publicly the laws of the Republic is not the mission of the bishops, and the pulpits of parish churches are not rostrums for political discussions. How well he [Delamaire] chose his time! What a sense of opportunity! A letter like that of the Bishop of Perigueux does more for Jacobin anticlericalism than twenty Radical-Socialist speeches."[2]

The following month, Mgr. Turinaz, Bishop of Nancy, fell into bad odor with the government. On Easter Sunday, April 12, Turinaz permitted an unauthorized Redemptorist monk to preach at Nancy, and after the sermon, Turinaz himself took the pulpit in full regalia and proceeded to criticize the cabinet's suppression of preaching by unauthorized monks. An account of the bishop's remarks was sent to Paris by the Attorney General of the Court of Appeal at Nancy, and it appears to have been the only one to have reached the Ministry of Cults. The author of the report asserted that Mgr. Turinaz aspired to the martyrdom of being prosecuted for his opposition to the government so that he might pose as a victim of anticlerical persecution and thereby gain popularity with the clericals of the diocese.[3] This document did not come to the attention of the Ministry of Cults until April 25, but in the meantime the combative Mgr. Turinaz had embarked upon yet another campaign of protest against Combes' policies. On April 19 the prelate, again from the pulpit, criticized the cabinet's suppression of the preaching orders, and the secularization procedures previously established, which provided that a monk could not be secularized so long as his order continued to exist abroad. Turinaz on this occasion had allowed a former Jesuit to preach in the cathedral.[1] This deliberate affront to the sensibilities of anticlericals in Paris could scarcely have been expected to pass unnoticed. Combes lost no time in moving against Turinaz with a salary suspension on April 22. In his letter notifying the bishop of the cabinet's decision, Combes made much of the geographical position of Nancy in eastern France as a factor influencing his decision to take punitive action: "It is regrettable that, placed in a post of confidence, you have not hesitated, so near the frontier, to set an example of scorn for the government of your country."[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6271, Attitude de l'épiscopat à la suite du refus d'autorisation aux congrégations, 1903.

[2] Le Temps, 4 March 1903, p. 1.

[3] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6137, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of the Attorney-General of the Court of Appeal at Nancy to the Minister of Justice, Nancy, 16 April 1903.

The energetic Bishop of Nancy, however, had still other bolts to loose; the affair was not to be ended with a mere suspension of salary. In August, Turinaz wrote an open letter to the prefect of the department, further criticizing the government's policies and announcing that he had every intention of continuing to allow unauthorized monks to preach in his diocese.[3] Combes referred this latest provocation to the Ministry of Justice for possible further action. It was the opinion of the Minister of Justice that the bishop's action constituted an infraction of Article 204 of the Penal Code, and was punishable by banishment.[1] The Direction of Cults decided however that although retribution was justified, it was not politically opportune. It was pointed out that the prelate's "dearest wish is to pose as a defender of the clergy and an apostle of freedom," thereby attracting attention to himself.[2]

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[1] _L'Autorité_, 22 April 1903, p. 1.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6137, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of Combes to Mgr. Turinaz, Paris, 22 April 1903.

[3] _La semaine religieuse de Nancy_, 24 August 1903, pp. 719-720.

There was doubtless some truth to this charge. The press had given considerable publicity to the government's conflict with the episcopacy and Turinaz had been accorded particular notice. The bishop gave interviews freely, and was quoted as saying that he expected to be prosecuted for his acts.[3] The clerical press praised him lavishly and made much of the contrast between the Bishop of Nancy's boldness and the timidity of most of the rest of the Catholic hierarchy.[4] For their part, the anticlerical papers strongly criticized Turinaz and at first advocated prosecuting the bishop,[5] or closing the cathedral at Nancy: "The church at Nancy is a national edifice; why did not M. Combes close it? A sentry at the door . . . and that's the end of that."[6] With the passage of time, however, intransigent anticlericals came to approve the government's policy as the better course of action: "The government refuses to prosecute Turinaz despite his many provocations. This disdainful attitude humiliates the prelate. The Turinazes are not dangerous, and right now they are extremely useful. Let them blunder in peace! Leave them their liberty."[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6137, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of the Minister of Justice to Combes, Paris, 3 September 1903.

[2] Ibid., Report, prepared by the Direction of Cults, 31 August 1903.

[3] Le Figaro, 27 August 1903, p. 1.

[4] La Libre Parole, 27 August 1903, p. 1; L'Autorité, 30 August 1903, p. 2; Le Peuple Française (Paris), 1 September 1903, p. 1.

[5] La Lanterne, 26 August 1903, p. 1.

[6] Le Rappel, 26 August 1903, p. 1.

It was Bishop Turinaz who indirectly was responsible for causing Mgr. Andrieu, Bishop of Marseilles, to run afoul of the government in the fall of 1903. On his way to Lourdes with some 600 pilgrims, Turinaz stopped over in Marseilles and went to the cathedral. It was reported that Andrieu was not present to receive him, but he was welcomed by Abbé Darbon, the parish curé. Darbon congratulated Turinaz as "a valiant man whose name resounds from one end of France to the other" and urged him to "continue his struggle against the persecution of conscience and the violation of liberty." Turinaz then took the pulpit personally and "congratulated himself upon his stand against the government." On the following day, Turinaz spoke in another church, but in more moderate terms, "on this occasion confining himself to placing France under the Virgin's protection."[2] Combes, upon receipt of this report, immediately wrote to Bishop Andrieu, demanding an explanation of Abbé Darbon's attitude and words, and instructed Andrieu to use his authority over the activities of his clergy.[3] Instead of replying, Andrieu on September 5 released a circular letter to his clergy, labelling the government's supervision of ecclesiastical affairs a proscription and condemning the governmental attitude toward the hierarchy. These observations were formulated in stinging terms and could scarcely have been intended as a conciliatory

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1. L'Aurore, 29 August 1903, p. 1.

2. Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6137, Suppressions de traitement. Report of the Prefect of the Department of Bouches-du-Rhone to Combes, Marseilles, 4 September 1903.

3. Ibid., Letter of Combes to Mgr. Andrieu, Paris, 4 September 1903.

gesture.[1] Combes replied by suspending Andrieu's salary the following day.[2]

In addition to the three particular instances noted above, Combes found himself involved in less serious conflicts with the hierarchy in a number of other cases. These affairs were provoked by attacks of the parish clergy in various dioceses upon the government's policies. Combes believed that bishops were duty-bound to supervise the parish clergy and to prevent their engaging in "political agitation." In the event of a priest's being accused of criticizing the government, Combes usually notified the clergyman's bishop, expecting disciplinary action to be taken by ecclesiastical authorities. When such action did not seem to be forthcoming, Combes intervened, usually to suspend the offending cleric's salary. The Premier utilized these occasions to scold the prelate involved for neglect of his supervisory duties and for failure to enact the disciplinary measures merited by the offense.[3]

One other dispute between civil and ecclesiastical powers ought to be mentioned here. This affair centered around a decision by the government to suppress the use of the Breton language in Brittany and to insist upon the exclusive use of French, even in religious instruction. In January 1903 Combes had issued an administrative circular to this effect. Interpellated in the Chamber of Deputies, Combes had defended his decision by pointing out that similar circulars had been issued in the past to exclude the use of Flemish and of Basque. He continued: "When I composed the circular, I imagined like everyone else that Brittany was in France. I also thought that French ought to be the national language there. To hear the protests aroused, one would think that out there, one is Breton first and French second."[1] The Premier did not regard this issue as a minor one. "Breton," he said, "lends itself less than French to the expression of new ideas--these villainous and detestable republican ideas."[2] Combes cited a report from the Prefect of the Department of Finistère to the effect that fully eighty per cent of the children of the department were capable of receiving religious instruction in French, and he expressed determination to see his language policy implemented. "As long as I remain Minister of Cults," Combes concluded, "I shall enforce my circular, and I am prepared to suspend as many salaries as are necessary to effect my orders."[3] That Combes was as good as his word is illustrated by statistics. In January, 1903, the number of clergymen whose salaries were suspended for use of Breton stood at twenty-seven in the diocese of Quimper.[4] In August, the Bishop of Quimper stated that eighty-eight suspensions were in effect, sixty-nine of them having been decreed for use of Breton in religious instruction. The bishop predicted that the number of salaries suspended would eventually rise to equal one-half of those paid in the diocese.[5] The policy of retribution against the clergy of Brittany was the fundamental cause of a dispute between the bishop and Combes, which was to result in the bishop's name being joined to the others in the ranks of the unpaid. Connected with this affair, and helping to provoke it, was a governmental decree closing the Chapel of St. Joseph in Quimper on

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[1] Le Gaulois, 5 September 1903, p. 2.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6137, Suppressions de traitement. Letter of Combes to Mgr. Andrieu, Paris, 6 September 1903.

[3] Ibid., 6131, Suppression de traitement. Circulaires et correspondance. (There are a number of letters from Combes on this subject in this file.)

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1. Combes, Une campagne laïque, p. 155. (Speech of 16 January 1903, Chamber of Deputies.)

2. Ibid., p. 158.

3. Ibid., p. 164.

4. Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6131, Suppression de traitement. Circulaires et correspondance. Report, prepared by the Direction of Cults.

5. Le Temps, 15 August 1903, p. 2.

June 26. The chapel had been used by Jesuits prior to their departure from the diocese, and the bishop protested the closing of the chapel on the grounds that it had been duly authorized by Napoleon III in 1857. When these observations were disregarded by the government, the bishop on June 29 removed the host from the chapel to the cathedral, where he made an address denouncing the "religious persecution" raging in France.[1] A month later, the bishop addressed a circular letter to his clergy, urging them to support a mutual assistance society organized for the purpose of giving financial aid to clergymen whose salaries had been suspended. The prelate termed the government's religious policies shortsighted and unfair to both clergy and laity, and stated that in areas where French was not understood, priests were to continue using Breton in defiance of the government's orders.[2] Since it was to be expected that this defiance would result in further suspensions, the work of a mutual assistance fund would be especially welcome. Approximately 100,000 francs would be needed before the end of the year, and both clergy and laity were urged to donate to the cause.[3]

Much to the confusion and embarrassment of the Direction of Cults, news of these unseemly episcopal manifestations had to be gleaned from newspaper accounts. The Prefect of the Department of Finistere had not kept Paris *au courant* of events; the Ministry of Cults had had no word of the bishop's allocution of June 29, nor of his support for the mutual assistance society until these activities were made public through the press. The prefect was scolded for his negligence and pre-emptorily commanded to forward to Paris all documents relating to the affair.[1] Once aware of the facts in the case, the government acted swiftly. Combes obviously took a much more serious view of the situation in Quimper than did the prefect. In a letter to the bishop, Combes notified him that his salary was suspended and made the following observations concerning the prelate's support of the mutual aid society:

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[1] *La semaine religieuse de Quimper*, 3 July 1903, pp. 429-432.

[2] *Lettre-circulaire de Mgr. l'Evêque de Quimper et de Léon au clergé de son diocèse au sujet de l'association de bienfaisance en faveur du clergé du diocèse* (Quimper, 1903), pp. 6-8.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

> Such an association tends to destroy the government's disciplinary power over ecclesiastical titularies--a recognized power of the government--confirmed on numerous occasion by the Council of State. More serious still, it completely overturns the rules prescribing the organization of the Catholic religion in France. . . . The law of July 1, 1901, in its first provisions, proclaimed everyone's right to associate. However, it must be noted that it did not affect the special obligation that our concordatory legislation imposes upon the clergy, and it did not lift the injunction against the clergy's meeting in deliberative assemblies. I regret to note that the impulse given by you to your priests tends toward nothing less than to inaugurate in the Diocese of Quimper an attempt at separating church and state.[2]

In a very real sense, the opposition of the higher clergy to the government's anticlerical measures merely played into the hands of the radicals without materially benefitting the Church's cause. One of the favorite themes upon which Combes and his colleagues liked to play in 1903 was that the clergy, not the government, was guilty of violating the Concordat. If it should ever become necessary to rupture the established pattern of relations with the Catholic Church, Combes asserted, the fault would rest with the clergy. The Premier first enunciated this idea in a speech to the Senate in March 1903:

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 5631, Groupements religieux. Affaire Evêque de Quimper. Letter of M. Magny (Assistant Director of Cults) to the Prefect of the Department of Finistere, Paris, 21 August 1903.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Combes to the Bishop of Quimper, Paris, 27 August 1903.

> To denounce the Concordat at this time, without having sufficiently prepared the public for such a denunciation, without having explicitly and with complete documentation established that it is the Catholic clergy itself which provoked and desired it, which rendered it inevitable, would be a political error. . . . I do not say that a rupture of the bonds uniting the Catholic Church and the state will not occur at some given time. I do not even say that the day is not far off; I am merely saying that it has not yet arrived.[1]

The Concordat, Combes maintained, was violated when ecclesiastics criticized the government's policies in letters to their subordinates, or when bishops allowed unauthorized monks to preach in their cathedrals. "The French clergy," Combes stated,

> seems finally to have rallied to the Ultramontane theory that regards the Concordat not as a contract, but as a simple concession from the ecclesiastical power. . . . We are for the integral maintenance of the stipulations contained in the concordatory act. We will resign ourselves to a denunciation, in accord with all the republican party, which no longer wishes to be mystified, rather than lend ourselves longer to the indefinite prolongation of a situation which is neither war nor peace, but which infinitely more resembles war than peace.[2]

The month of May found Combes reiterating his thesis that the clergy systematically violated the Concordat, and that the government's policies were based upon a desire to protect and preserve the pact. Combes further noted that the state's weapons against clerical encroachments, though seemingly formidable, were in reality insufficient. The higher clergy in particular did not fear a suspension of salary since it could count upon public subscriptions for its support. The legal alternative of systematic and repeated imprisonment of ecclesiastic personnel would not be tolerated by public opinion.[3] "While it is true that Article One of the Concordat begins by declaring the free practice of the Roman Catholic religion in France," stated Combes, "the document concludes with the obligation imposed upon the Catholic religion to conform to the police regulations the government judges necessary for public tranquillity."[1]

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[1] Combes, _Une campagne laïque_, p. 200. (Speech of 21 March 1903, Senate.)

[2] _Ibid._, pp. 204-205.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 269, 270. (Speech of 20 May 1903, Senate.)

The message was repeated in speeches outside the parliamentary chambers. In August, after having crossed swords with the bishops of Nancy, Perigueux, and Quimper, the Premier made a speech at Marseilles, with whose bishop he would come into conflict in September. The disorder caused by the clerical opposition to the government could not continue, Combes maintained. He criticized the episcopacy's support of the religious orders and its defiance of concordatory legislation: "I do not know towards what end it is moving, or if in its thoughts, the denunciation of the Concordat is its goal. . . ."[2]

The foregoing account of Combes' policies and words might lead to the conclusion that the Premier was completely devoid of all spontaneity and wit in his anticlerical pronouncements. Though he did tend to take a grave view of his government's conflict with the Church, even Combes was capable of seeing a comical aspect of the politics of anticlericalism. Describing clerical attempts to rouse Brittany to defense of the congregations whose existence was threatened, Combes observed:

> Under the leadership of combative priests and former officers, they [the nuns] fortified, in accordance with a new art, certain monastic schools that the government had ordered closed. In front of the doors they dug redoubtable moats filled with a liquid taken from the most private places of the good sisters' house, and on the walls they installed formidable machines that launched projectiles capable of asphyxiating even the boldest assailant.[3]

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[1] Combes, *Une campagne laïque*, p. 266. (Speech of 20 May 1903, Senate.)

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 338. (Speech of 8 August 1903, Marseilles.)

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 330.

And at Tréguier, Combes pursued the theme:

> Nobles and priests worked in concert, the former pushing forward their tenants, the latter dragging in their wake troops of their devotees. The arms chosen were worthy of these hardy warriors. They gave off odors that have nothing in common with the perfume of incense. . . . They barricaded themselves in their convents, determined to withstand a siege, and with a foresight that will surprise no one, they stocked up large stores of provisions, doubtless telling themselves that in such extremities, abstinence and fasting were not in season.[1]

But levity was not Combes' most characteristic trait, nor was it typical of his frame of mind at the conclusion of the anticlerical campaign in 1903. Relations between the civil and the ecclesiastical powers had steadily deteriorated during the year and France was appreciably closer to an open breach with the Vatican than at any time during the recent past. Though Combes personally professed an aversion to rupturing the concordatory pact, his numerous references to clerical violations of the Concordat could be interpreted as scarcely veiled threats to the effect that he could be pushed into altering his views. Indeed, Combes' stand in regard to his charge of ecclesiastical infringements of concordatory legislation might be viewed as a sort of preliminary broaching of the subject of a rupture. If a denunciation should become desirable or necessary, it might be a good political maneuver to claim that the higher clergy must bear the onus of blame. Coupled with this reasoning is Combes' peculiarly personal conception of his role as Premier. There can be little doubt that Combes would prove capable of changing his pro-concordatory policy and espousing separation of church and state if his majority evidenced a strong intention of moving in that direction. As the number of religious schools suppressed mounted, as the number of religious orders refused authorization increased, and as the

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1. Combes, Une campagne laïque, p. 361. (Speech of 13 September 1903, Treguier.)

sparring and outright clashes between the high clergy and the government grew in frequency and severity, there was little cause for optimism in the camp of the moderates.

The conflict with the episcopacy may be regarded as one of the most serious trends in church-state relations. The prelates were probably motivated by a sense of duty to protect the faith, personified by the religious orders and monastic schools, but they were also, in some cases, subject to pressures exercised by the clerical press or by clerical groups and associations. The bishops were finding themselves caught in a situation that daily was growing more intolerable. They could not reconcile the state's conception of them as functionaries with their own conception of themselves as guardians and propagators of a faith that seemed to be under attack and increasingly on the defensive. If they protested policies they regarded as tantamount to persecution the state accused them of disloyalty; if they remained silent, their clerical supporters accused them of treason to their faith. It is difficult to condone the activities of a Turinaz, whose deeds and words seemed as often inspired by non-religious as by religious motives, and yet Mgr. Turinaz won the plaudits of many good Catholics because he, at least, was acting instead of merely holding his peace. It seemed likely that Turinaz would to a certain degree become a model for other ecclesiastics to follow, and not necessarily because his actions were thought to be politically wise or spiritually attractive. Turinaz's great virtue in the eyes of many was the fact that he considered the situation in which the Church found itself sufficiently annoying or alarming to take action of any sort whatever.

The basic question illuminated by the events of 1903 was a serious one and of great consequence for the future of church-state relations in France. In reality, it was the same issue that had been at the bottom of the anticlerical campaign inaugurated in 1899. It is not too much to assert that this issue had been the underlying cause of every dispute that had troubled relations between church and state since the Revolution. The events of 1903 had merely served to throw it into sharper relief. There was in France a fundamental disagreement between the republican civil power and the ecclesiastical power over the role and function of religion in the modern world. This disagreement led naturally to a dispute over the nature and purpose of the Concordat of 1801. From the Church's point of view, religion was the greatest and most abiding of man's concerns, the only one that really mattered, since it affected the salvation of man's immortal soul. The Concordat existed to guarantee the Catholic Church the free and untrammeled exercise of its spiritual mission of salvation. The Church must interpret for itself how its mission might best be served, and then must have freedom to implement its interpretation.

The government of the Republic, on the other hand, had come over the years to regard religion as merely one of man's activities, and by no means the most important one. The Church regarded man as a soul to be saved, but the state regarded him as a citizen with social, political, and economic interests and obligations; religious duties and interests must come after civic ones. The Concordat existed as a contractual agreement between two powers and must safeguard the interests of both. The priest was a citizen; the Church was a legally constituted organization existing only within the framework of the state, and the Church and its clergy would have to conform to established legal principles and to new legislation. The state could not admit that ecclesiastical personnel formed a special caste apart from other functionaries, with special privileges of disagreeing with or criticizing governmental policies, even when these policies affected the status of the

Church itself. Out of these conflicting conceptions arose the crisis toward which church-state relations were heading throughout 1903. Perhaps both Combes and Turinaz can be regarded as symbolic figures illustrating this fundamental disagreement analyzed above. They did more than merely disagree, they failed even to speak the same language. And they were moving further apart rather than closer together in 1903. The prospects seemed to promise that the crisis would worsen before it would be resolved.

Chapter IX

COMBES AND THE DIPLOMACY OF ANTICLERICALISM, 1903

In his memoirs, written shortly after his retirement in 1905, Emile Combes devoted relatively little space to a discussion of his ideas on foreign policy. This is rather surprising because the years 1902-1905 were crucial ones in France's relations with both Germany and Britain. The Franco-Russian Treaty of 1894 was expanded into the Triple Entente in 1904, while ominously, relations with imperial Germany were entering a period of deterioration that would culminate in the ugly Moroccan Crisis of 1905. Yet Combes scarcely touched upon these important developments in foreign affairs. Obviously, then, the Premier must have diverted his attention and energies toward other—and in his eyes—more important ends. At one point in his narrative, Combes attempted to refute the notion that he was so engrossed in domestic anticlericalism that he neglected foreign relations altogether. In general terms he noted that he favored cultivating the good will of the great powers in order to combat the isolation imposed upon France after the Franco-Prussian War.[1] About the only piece of personal diplomacy that Combes recorded having undertaken concerned Alsace-Lorraine. He reported that he enjoyed excellent relations with Prince Radolin, the German Ambassador to France, and one day, "unofficially, as a private citizen," Combes broached to Radolin a plan for the return of the lost provinces to France. This plan embodied a unique simplicity and directness that are characteristic of the man: in view of Germany's increasing population and industrial output, and in view of the well-known German desire to acquire overseas possessions, perhaps Germany would agree to a simple transfer of territory. France would willingly barter one or two of her colonial holdings, such as Tonkin or Madagascar, for Alsace-Lorraine. Such a voluntary transfer of property would do much to smooth relations between the two powers and ensure future peace. Radolin replied that he was not empowered to discuss such a proposal, and continued to avoid making a statement when Combes broached the subject on subsequent occasions.[1]

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[1] Combes, _Mon ministère_, pp. 217-218.

Beyond this abortive excursion into personal diplomacy, Combes did not attempt any further ventures in the diplomatic field. Indeed, despite his protests to the contrary, it is evident that the Premier was so preoccupied with anticlerical issues he had inherited or manufactured, that he had neither the time, energy, nor inclination to assume the active direction of foreign policy. The picture that emerges from Combes' brief account is one of dependence upon Delcassé for both the formulation and execution of foreign policy. "It was a profound satisfaction for me to have had him /Delcassé/ as a colleague in my government, and to have supported him in his work, giving my approval to all measures of a diplomatic nature that he proposed to me," Combes wrote.[2] Acquiescence in the proposals of his Foreign

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1. Combes, *Mon ministère*, p. 220.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

Minister fits in well with Combes' well-known role of coordinator rather than formulator of government policy. However, it is necessary to point out that his passive outlook on the Quai d'Orsay's activities did not extend to questions concerning church-state relations. Here Combes obviously regarded himself, not Delcassé, as minister most competent to formulate policy. Indeed, Combes was exceedingly active where relations with the Vatican were concerned, and it is easy to observe that he was no less preoccupied with questions affecting the religious prerogatives of the state than had been Waldeck-Rousseau. Several questions troubled diplomatic relations with the Vatican during the period under consideration, and Combes proved to be a more inflexible negotiator than his immediate predecessor.

It is perhaps characteristic of Combes that his conduct of relations with the Vatican should have immediately taken on aspects of a contest. However, in his first encounter with the intricacies of church-state diplomacy, Combes found himself embroiled in a controversy of long standing: the question of the correct wording to be employed in papal bulls of investiture. It might be imagined that so elementary an issue as one of proper Latin phraseology would scarcely trouble relations between sovereign powers. Yet nothing could more forcibly demonstrate how precarious was the balance of good relations between France and the papacy than this seemingly trivial issue of "nobis nominavit."

Under the terms of the Concordat of 1801, French bishops were nominated by the head of the state and approved by the Pope. Further concordatory legislation prescribed a rather formal procedure to be followed at all times. Upon receiving the chief of state's nomination, the bishop could take possession of his diocese only after the Council of State had formally registered a papal bull, or bull of canonic investiture, investing the bishop with his religious powers and functions. After registration of the bull, the Council of State published a decree recognizing the bishop as rightful titulary to the diocese. Further regulations were established to specify the proper ceremonies to be observed by municipal and military authorities to welcome a new archbishop or bishop to his see.[1] Though elaborate, these regulations were obviously prepared with a view toward preventing the occurrence of incidents that might disrupt church-state relations.

Alas, even the most precise guidelines sometimes proved insufficient. In the case at hand, it was not a lack of attention to prescribing ceremony, but rather a lack of attention to establishing phraseology that was destined to provoke conflict. In all fairness to Premier Combes, let it be noted that the "nobis" issue was not of his own making, but was inherited as an unresolved problem dating back many years. In outward appearances, the question was a simple one, though it had vexed the Council of State, the Ministry of Cults, and the Foreign Office for at least thirty years before Emile Combes was called upon to wrestle with it.

For the purposes of this narrative, let it be understood that the "nobis" dispute had been resurrected during the administration of Waldeck-Rousseau. In June 1901, a collective note from the Council of State to the Ministry of Cults announced the publication of decrees recognizing papal investiture for several bishops; however, the Council felt it necessary to call attention to an innovation in the wording of the bull of canonic investiture. In Latin, the opening sentence of the document ran as follows: "Excellentissimus presidens Emilius Loubet nobis nominavit . . ." followed by the name of a bishop.[1] Literally rendered, the Latin means "The very excellent President Emile Loubet has nominated to us . . ." It was the word "nobis" that excited the suspicions of the ever-watchful Council; "nobis" was clearly an innovation. The word should not have appeared in the sentence at all. "Excellentissimus presidens Emilius Loubet nominavit . . ." was the traditional form for such documents. The interpolation of "nobis"--here referring to the Pope by use of the papal "we"--constituted in the Council's opinion an infringement of the President's concordatory position as the sole authority empowered to make nominations. The question raised here was a subtle one, on the surface merely a matter of form, but in the eyes of the Council of State, embodying much more than an issue of Latin usage. "The most excellent President Emile Loubet has nominated to us . . ." carried with it an implication that the Vatican was attempting to intrude itself into an area specifically reserved as a prerogative of the French State. "The most excellent President Emile Loubet has nominated . . .," without its sly inclusion of "to us" made it absolutely plain that the process of ecclesiastical nomination was exclusively reserved to the President of the Republic, a prerogative not to be shared--grammatically or substantively--with any person or institution. The Council recommended that in the future, the word "nobis" must be omitted from bulls of canonic investiture, and that the old traditions of usage ought to be rigorously insisted upon by the government. Otherwise, the Council warned, it would refuse to register such bulls, it would not issue decrees of investiture, and episcopal sees would remain vacant as a result.[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1956, Nobis nominavit. Note sur l'instauration des évêques, Paris, 21 October 1903.

Lest it be imagined that a conflict over a single word was symptomatic merely of the increased tension between church and state at the turn of the century, it should be pointed out that the dispute over "nobis" was one of long standing. Waldeck, and later Combes, were not inventing issues when they dealt with this question from 1901 until 1903. Even in more placid times and under less dedicated anticlericals, an alteration of traditional phraseology in investiture bulls had been thought to infringe upon the prerogatives guaranteed to the state by the Concordat. Just after the nominal establishment of the Republic in 1871, the Vatican introduced the word "presentavit" in place of "nominavit" in investiture bulls, and the Council of State had taken umbrage at the innovation. Jules Simon, then Minister of Cults and of Justice, had requested Foreign Minister Gabriel Hanotaux to protest this change of wording in a note to the Vatican.[1] The "nobis" issue was not unknown to Jules Simon, but he was inclined to view the question as being one primarily of grammar which did not endanger the imprescriptible rights of the state. The Council of State partially shared this view, for though it called attention to the use of "nobis" in bulls, it decided to register such bulls with certain reservations. As Simon put it,

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1956, Nobis nominavit. Note of the Council of State, 13 June 1901.

[2] *Ibid.*

> To my mind, this discussion has worn thin . . . and such is also the opinion of the Council of State. . . . In the light of previous declarations by the Vatican, use of the words 'nobis nominavit' does not compromise the rights of the state. Therefore I do not think it fitting to undertake any new communication with the Vatican on this subject.[2]

Neither Waldeck nor Combes concurred with Simon's opinion that the "nobis" issue constituted no threat to the President's exclusive right of nomination. Waldeck instructed Delcassé to confer with Mgr. Lorenzelli, the Nuncio, and to impress upon him the necessity of conforming to traditional usage in preparing future investiture bulls.[1] Before the matter could be resolved, Waldeck-Rousseau left office and the matter was still hanging fire when Combes became Premier.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1955, Nobis nominavit. Frais des bulles. Forme des bulles de l'institution canonique. Letter of Jules Simon to Gabriel Hanotaux, Versailles, 18 October 1871.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Simon to Hanotaux, Versailles, 21 October 1872.

It is apparent that Delcassé was loath to revive the "nobis" issue. In 1901 he had communicated with Waldeck on the inadvisability of reopening negotiations with the Vatican on this subject. Recalling the acquiescence of Jules Simon in the early 1870's, Delcassé observed: "In these circumstances, you will doubtless share my opinion that it would be inopportune, especially in the light of present conditions, to reopen this question, and no doubt you will have the Council of State share this view."[2] Though Waldeck's views are not clear, the Ministry of Cults apparently used what influence it possessed with the Council of State in 1902 to secure the registration of bulls employing the questionable "nobis," but Waldeck noted in a memorandum to Delcassé that the Council of State appeared quite resolved not to register any future bulls using the word.[3]

After the accession of Combes, Delcassé renewed his observations that the times were not propitious for reopening discussion on "nobis nominavit" with the Vatican. One of his first communications with Combes touched upon this subject. Delcassé requested that Combes impress upon the Council of State

> the inconvenience of bringing up, after so long a time, a question so susceptible of causing a conflict. I doubt that the Council

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1956, Nobis nominavit. Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 26 May 1902.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Delcassé to Waldeck-Rousseau, Paris, 18 September 1901.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 26 May 1902.

> attaches such importance to reforming the precedents in usage regarding the registration of bulls that it would fail to recognize the inconvenience of conducting negotiations the results of which are uncertain and during which some dioceses would have to remain vacant for an undetermined period.[1]

In November 1902, after the Vatican continued to use "nobis" in investiture bulls, the Council of State made good its threats: it refused to register such bulls in two separate cases.[2] Not surprisingly, Combes disregarded his Foreign Minister's advice and supported the Council. Combes sent the defective bulls to Delcassé with a request that the Quai d'Orsay discuss with Mgr. Lorenzelli the desirability of deleting "nobis" from the text of such bulls. Combes stated that he must support the Council of State on this question since it had served clear warning of its attitude in previous notes.[3]

Nearly four months elapsed before the Vatican's reaction was manifested. In March 1903, Delcassé communicated to Combes a note prepared by Cardinal Rampolla, in which the Cardinal Secretary of State dealt, although rather obliquely, with Combes' observations. Rampolla justified the use of "nobis" on the following grounds: "The government, by means of its power of nomination, does not confer the diocese, or to be more exact, does not make the bishop as the Council of State seems to think, but simply indicates to the Pope the person who should receive from the latter--by means of canonic investiture--the diocese with the rights of jurisdiction joined to it . . ." The bishop was primarily a religious figure and investiture could only be accorded by the Church. The use of "nobis" was simply a means of emphasizing the role of the Pope in appointing ecclesiastical personnel. Without it, it might be thought that mere nomination by the chief of state was tantamount to creating a bishop, without allowing for the Pope's prerogative of refusing canonic investiture if he judged it necessary. Moreover, Rampolla recalled the precedent established in 1872 when Simon and the Council of State had accepted bulls employing the terminology in question. The Vatican had considered the issue resolved since that time, Rampolla said. In closing, Rampolla introduced a new element into the dispute. In times past, he averred, the form "nobis nominavit" had been quite customary and was frequently employed. The controversy surrounding this usage had arisen after a fire had destroyed the archives of the Foreign Ministry. Only a few bulls of canonic investiture could be found in the National Archives, and these examples had lacked the word "nobis." Accordingly, the Council of State had accepted these bulls as models, and when subsequent bulls employed "nobis," the Council had decided that such usage constituted an innovation detrimental to the prerogatives of the state. Thus Rampolla, by insisting upon "nobis," could as easily pose as a champion of tradition as the Council of State, which insisted upon its deletion.[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F19 1956, Nobis nominavit. Letter of Delcassé to Combes, Paris, 9 June 1902.

[2] Ibid., Projet d'avis du conseil d'Etat, November 1902.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 2 December 1902.

Emile Combes did not accept Rampolla's assertions. The Cardinal's whole argument, Combes averred, was constructed to defend the Vatican's right of granting canonic investiture, a prerogative that the government had no intention of contesting. Combes insisted that the use of "nobis" in conjunction with "nominavit" reinforced the Pope's recognized rights—rights that scarcely required restatement, so well established were they: "In bulls of nomination, the Pope's privilege of according canonic investiture is clearly stated on several occasions. Moreover, the very fact that the government requests canonic investiture from the Pope is sufficient admission that there can be no bishop without it . . ."[1] In Combes' view, the Vatican's insistence upon maintaining the use of "nobis" constituted an "attenuation of the recognized rights of the President"--and for this reason, the government would continue to insist upon its deletion.[2]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F19 1956, Nobis nominavit. Letter of Cardinal Rampolla to Delcassé, Rome, 9 March 1903.

With that, the matter reached an impasse. Le Figaro reported that Leo XIII was adamant on this question; the Pope would never yield even if all the dioceses in France remained vacant.[3] La Libre Parole opined that Cardinal Rampolla's note indicated that the Vatican would refuse to compromise on the "nobis" issue; therefore Combes would be forced to do so.[4] La Lanterne, on the other hand, placed the dispute on the same ground as did Combes. The newspaper regarded the conflict as another example of clerical violation of the Concordat, and criticized Delcassé for being too conciliatory toward Rome.[5]

The question was destined to hang fire for some time, but eventually it ceased to be an important factor in France's relations with the Vatican. Cardinal Rampolla found occasion to refer once more to the "nobis" issue in 1903. In a letter to Mgr. Lorenzelli, Rampolla cited the "nobis" controversy as an indication that the government intended to "push hostilities against the

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1956, Nobis nominavit. Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 31 March 1903.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Le Figaro, 7 February 1903, p. 1.

[4] La Libre Parole, 8 March 1903, p. 1.

[5] La Lanterne, 10 February 1903, p. 1.

Catholic religion to the most extreme limits." However, Rampolla continued, though the use of "nobis" was current in every country enjoying the privilege of nominating bishops, the Vatican would no longer insist upon it in France.[1]

Some time was required before this conciliatory attitude on Rampolla's part was allowed to develop into a positive *détente*. Little was written or said about "nobis" from the spring of 1903 until January 1904. Then it became apparent that the Vatican had yielded to the demands of the French government. Delcassé informed Combes that after a lapse of nearly two years, the bulls of canonic investiture for the bishops of Beauvais and of Compistron, returned to Rome at Combes' request in February 1902, had been revised by the Pontifical Chancellery, and the offending "nobis" had disappeared. Moreover, Delcassé continued, the Vatican had assured the Quai d'Orsay that "nobis" would henceforth no longer be employed in bulls of canonic investiture.[2] Surely this retreat on the Vatican's part constituted a victory of sorts for Combes, but the Premier found his triumph rather tarnished by a small technicality that Delcassé had obviously chosen to ignore. Combes wrote to his Foreign Minister: "I must point out that the word 'nobis' has not been officially effaced from the bulls in question, but rather that it has simply been scratched through, without any evidence of official authorization, since there is no signature of any sort to certify its authenticity."[3] Despite these objections, Combes must have felt that the effacement was indeed genuine, for on the same day that he complained to Delcassé, he requested the Council of State to inaugurate proceedings to register the bulls.[1] Delcassé was of the opinion that the Vatican's desire for settlement was genuine and urged acceptance of the bulls, despite the admittedly peculiar means of deletion employed.[2] The Council of State was amenable to accepting the bulls, and on February 11, 1904 published the decrees that gave the bishops possession of their dioceses.[3] With that the vexing problem of "nobis" appeared closed and Combes could congratulate himself upon a victory.[4]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VI (1903). Letter of Cardinal Rampolla to Mgr. Lorenzelli, Rome, 11 April 1903.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1956, Nobis nominavit. Letter of Delcassé to Combes, Paris, 11 January 1904.

[3] *Ibid.*, Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 25 January 1904.

While the "nobis" controversy was the lengthiest diplomatic dispute in which Combes engaged, it was by no means the only one, nor was it perhaps the most significant one. Moreover, it must be recalled that the "nobis" controversy was not fought out in a vacuum; while notes and letters were exchanged between Paris and Rome concerning niceties of Latin phraseology, there were several other points of dispute between the French government and the Vatican.

Needless to say, the Vatican was greatly perturbed by Combes' interpretation of those provisions of the Associations Law that affected the operation of Catholic schools in France. Of especial concern to Rome was the question of retroactivity—whether the Associations Law would supersede and render invalid the previous scholastic law of 1886, a fairly liberal measure from the Church's viewpoint. A great many religious orders had utilized the 1886 legislation to open schools; should the Associations Law be made retroactive, the Church would be confronted with the dismal spectacle of having numerous schools placed in an illegal situation. At best, each one would have to formulate a demand for parliamentary authorization. Early in 1902, while Waldeck was still Premier, Delcassé reported with satisfaction to Ambassador Nisard that the Council of Ministers had decided that the new law should not be retroactive; the scholastic establishments opened under prior legislation were safe.[1] Nisard replied from Rome that Cardinal Rampolla appeared gratified by this resolution.[2] This satisfaction was destined to evaporate in July 1902 when Combes, who did not feel himself bound by his predecessor's decisions, issued his ministerial decree requiring all schools employing members of the regular clergy, regardless of the institution's previous legal status, to formulate authorization requests.[3] The decree elicited immediate response from Rome. Cardinal Rampolla warned that Leo XIII could not afford to remain indifferent to the fate of Catholic education in France, a fate daily becoming more uncertain thanks to Combes' interpretation of the law.[4] The Pope delivered himself of some serious thoughts on this question in an audience he granted to the French Ambassador. Leo was vigorous in his protests against Combes' policies toward Catholic education. The whole audience, Nisard related, was devoted to the Premier's recent education decrees.[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1956, Nobis nominavit. Letter of Combes to the President of the Council of State, Paris, 25 January 1904.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Delcassé to Combes, Paris, 28 January 1904.

[3] Le Temps, 11 February 1904, p. 1.

[4] Perhaps it is worth noting that the Havas Agency reported in July, 1903 that the Vatican had agreed to the suppression of "nobis" from bulls of investiture. After this agreement in principle, Rome had obviously felt no need for haste in putting a term to the vacancies in the dioceses of Beauvais and Compistron, since it delayed returning the revised bulls to Paris for another five months.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 4 February 1902.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 15 February 1902.

[3] See above, pp. 186-188.

[4] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 7 July 1902.

In time, the Vatican decided to lodge an official protest with the Quai d'Orsay concerning Combes' attack upon the religious schools. This task fell to Mgr. Lorenzelli, and he delivered the note of protest on July 26. Mildly worded, the note was limited to reminding the Foreign Office of the assurances Delcassé had given Rome concerning the non-retroactivity of the Associations Law.[2] Lorenzelli asked Delcassé to intervene with Combes in hopes of "inspiring a more serene conception of the social interests and glorious patrimony of France."[3]

The Foreign Minister, visibly embarrassed at his role in these negotiations, had already undertaken to remind Combes of the resolution adopted by the Waldeck cabinet. A Foreign Office memorandum of July 17 stated tersely, "Delcassé engaged our word to the Holy See in February, 1902."[4] Even if the Prime Minister did not consider himself bound by his predecessor's pledge, Delcassé obviously felt that the assurances he had given Rome in February did indeed constitute a kind of pledge made in good faith, not to be lightly broken. To Combes, Delcassé wrote: "The declaration that I made on this subject to our representative to the Pontifical Government, repeated to him by that government, does actually engage our position on this subject."[5]

Combes simply ignored the issue of whether the Delcassé note to

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 12 July 1902.

[2] Ibid., Papal Note of Protest of 26 July 1902.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., Memorandum of 17 July 1902.

[5] Ibid., Letter of Delcassé to Combes, Paris, 19 July 1902.

Nisard constituted a pledge of any sort binding upon the present government. Instead, he chose to justify his contention that religious schools must apply for legal authorization on the grounds that they were unauthorized establishments subject to Article 13 of the law. Combes also suggested that Rome had no right to make any observations about how French laws were applied: "The law does not affect the intimate life of the congregation--that is, the rule and observances established for it by the Church; it restricts itself to regulating its external life. Here the government can regulate in a manner that is not subject to negotiation."[1]

Perhaps Combes' intransigence was partially attributable to his extreme displeasure occasioned by a report from M. Nisard. The Ambassador opined that the Pope was genuinely troubled by current developments in French religious policy. It was likely that he would very probably feel obliged to manifest his anxiety in some striking manner. A letter to the President of the Republic might be forthcoming, and Nisard obviously felt that such a démarche on the Vatican's part would be justified.[2] This revelation prompted Combes to write a long note to Delcassé, in which he succinctly outlined his views regarding the proper conduct of diplomatic relations with Rome:

> I do not know what were the language and attitude of our Ambassador in the interview he reported to you. I should like to think that he was able to uphold firmly the rights of his government in the matter of internal politics. . . . Please remind him, if need be, that the concordatory laws regulate all the relations of the French government with the Pope, just as they regulate all the

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 24 July 1902.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 14 July 1902.

> relations of the Pope with our government. These regulatory principles of our religious policy must not be lost to view during the conversations conducted in the Vatican. This is the only means, and it is an infallible one, of avoiding regrettable conflicts.[1]

The Premier then went on to maintain that freedom of education was not really the key issue: "Freedom of education is not the question; it is in truth a question of the supremacy of the civil power and of respect for the Concordat." Combes regarded the question of education as a purely internal one, of interest only to France, in which the Pope ought not to meddle. From the Vatican's viewpoint, Combes asserted, "liberty of education will not be complete if it is not placed above French law. The Pope cannot fail to comprehend that the schools in question have been prosecuted solely because they have neglected or have refused to place themselves in accord with the law."[2] According to Combes, then, there must be no weakening of the government's position in holding education to be an internal matter not subject to negotiation or compromise.

On another question Combes was equally adamant. Since the monastic orders were nowhere mentioned in the Concordat or in the supporting legislation, the Premier held that the congregations, their status, and indeed their existence in France were not subjects for diplomatic negotiation. Combes wrote:

> If conversations have been exchanged with representatives of the Vatican on the question of the religious orders, it is inadmissible that there might exist an official correspondence on this subject, and I do not need to stress to you the importance of not establishing a precedent in this matter that would be absolutely contrary to the spirit of our public law.[3]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 30 July 1902.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 7 August 1902.

In his public pronouncements and in his private communications with Delcassé, Combes insisted that his policy in regard to the Vatican was determined by his firm desire to preserve the Concordat. It will be recalled that Combes had consistently maintained that clerical manifestations occurring over the past two years had been motivated by part of the French clergy's desire to break the concordatory pact. Whenever it was convenient, Combes cast himself in the role of protector of the Concordat. When the French bishops presented their petition on behalf of the orders to President Loubet in July 1902, Combes had been quick to observe that

> a bishop who writes ceases to be a bishop, and when he throws himself into current polemics, even in a personal capacity, he is guilty of the same breach of conduct as the functionary who sends to the press articles or letters signed by himself. . . . If the Holy See wants the maintenance of the Concordat as I think it does, and as I certainly do, can it reconcile itself to such a situation?[1]

A week later, Combes again complained about

> cardinals, archbishops, and bishops who have engaged in the most unconstitutional and anti-concordatory activities, not to mention violent and passionate attacks upon the government. Forgetful of the legal principles that elevate the President of the Republic above all parties, no less forgetful of his lack of constitutional responsibility, they have written letters which they published to protest against the policy of his ministers in order to lead him to disavow it. Coming from public servants, such acts are constitutionally unjustifiable and absolutely contrary to the spirit of the Concordat.[2]

Despite all this thunder about clerical infractions of the Concordat there was some evidence that the Ministry of Cults and the Foreign Office were agreed upon the desirability of maintaining in good repair the religious orders that supported missionary work in the Far East and other areas. M. Dumay was favorable to authorizing a certain number of congregations with overseas branches, and promised to cooperate fully with the Quai d'Orsay when the time came to prepare authorization bills for such orders.[1] These reassuring indications from the Ministry of Cults notwithstanding, the Foreign Office felt that further attempts should be made to help Combes and Dumay fully appreciate the value of certain congregations for French influence abroad. Accordingly, a note was prepared for the purpose of priming Delcassé with pertinent information that might prove useful when he discussed the missionary orders' fate with Combes and Dumay. This document stressed the importance of monastic missions in maintaining French influence in the Ottoman Empire. But, the note concluded, the Far East was the critical area for French interests. Here rivalry with Germany was most intense and here the religious orders were prepared to make their greatest contribution in propagating French influence. It was imperative that the government recognize the orders that served this area lest German monks replace those of French origin. Moreover, the situation in regard to overseas missions had drastically changed since the 1870's and 1880's, when France had enjoyed a favored position in the Far East. At that time, Germany was earning the hostility of the Holy See because of the Kulturkampf, and newly united Italy was engaged in similar anticlerical measures. Now, thirty years later, the situation was reversed: Germany and Italy had made peace with the Church, but France was in the midst of a full-scale anticlerical campaign. Measures directed against the French missions could only benefit France's opponents in the Triple Alliance. The note specifically delineated the importance to French interests of the Franciscan missions in both the Near East and China; and the Capuchin and

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 24 July 1902.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 30 July 1902.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VI (1903). Note: Entrevue avec M. Dumay, Directeur des Cultes, 22 January 1903.

Benedictine orders were also mentioned. Special consideration was recommended for these orders and their foreign missions.[1]

The leaders of certain religious orders sensed that in the Quai d'Orsay they might find the support and sympathy so manifestly lacking at the Ministry of Cults. A number of them made overtures to the Foreign Office, seeking assurances that their foreign establishments would be safeguarded. Here there was little that the Quai d'Orsay could do except to inform the supplicants that they would have to prepare new authorization requests in which they specifically limited their functions to missionary work. Among the congregations listed as prepared to acquiesce in these requirements after their general applications for authorization had been rejected by Parliament were the Franciscans, the Capuchins, the Dominicans, and the Benedictines.[2]

There arose an unforeseen obstacle to these plans. In July it was reported from Jerusalem that the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Capuchins had indeed formulated authorization requests favorably reviewed by both Combes and Dumay. These orders were instructed to place themselves under the jurisdiction of French bishops to comply with the provision of the administrative decree of August 17, 1902. The Dominicans had accordingly applied to the Archbishop of Paris, and the Capuchins to the Archbishop of Lyon. Both archbishops refused to accept the orders under their jurisdiction, and the Vatican declined to intervene and oblige the archbishops to be responsible for the orders in question. Consequently nothing came of this effort to preserve the missions in the Levant. Moreover, when the Franciscans learned of the rebuff suffered by their brother congregations, they withdrew their requests for authorization.[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VI (1903). Note pour le Directeur des Affaires politiques, 30 January 1903.

[2] Ibid., Note pour le ministre, 17 March 1903.

Troublesome as these issues were, they paled into relative obscurity when compared to the supreme question in papal politics: the succession to the Throne of St. Peter. Here the French government felt that it had an important stake in the proceedings that must occur when Leo XIII should die. The Pope's health had been a matter of continuing concern to the Quai d'Orsay since 1901 and scarcely a dispatch came from M. Nisard in Rome that did not contain some reference to Leo's physical condition. The question of succession was sufficiently significant to Paris to cause the government to lay plans for a candidacy favorable to French interests long before Leo XIII showed serious signs of weakening. France had no desire to see ascending the papal throne a pontiff who might favor the Triple Alliance's interests over those of France. Accordingly, papal politics assumed in French eyes an aspect of the eternal struggle of France to escape the Germanic domination she had been forced to accept in European affairs since 1871. No precinct was too sacred to be exempt from the Franco-German duel for influence, not even the Vatican itself.

As Leo's health began visibly to decline in 1903, renewed interest in a possible successor was evident in Paris. The relative strengths of France and her Triple Alliance opponents in the College of Cardinals were assessed. Germany had only one cardinal for its twenty million Catholics, while France had seven. Spain had five cardinals for a Catholic population of eighteen millions. Austria was reportedly angling for the creation of two Hungarian cardinals. And of course Italy possessed more cardinals than any power, and Italy was a member of the despised "Triplice." Moreover, it was reported that Germany was opposed to Cardinal Rampolla's possible candidacy because Rampolla was thought to be excessively pro-French.[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VI (1903). Letter of M. Boppe, French Consul-general at Jerusalem to the Director of Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, 7 July 1903.

Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador to Spain, verified the unpopularity in certain quarters of Cardinal Rampolla, avowedly France's choice as the next Pope. Cambon reported that the Spanish Prime Minister, Señor Silvela, had told him frankly that Spain opposed Rampolla's possible candidacy, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the Cardinal Secretary of State had served as Papal Nuncio to Spain. Silvela also stated that he had discussed Rampolla's undesirability with representatives of Germany, Austria, and Italy and that on this question they were all in agreement. Cambon thought that the Triple Alliance powers had made overtures to the Spanish government on this question in an effort to achieve some sort of concert contrary to French interests.[2] This Spanish attitude toward Rampolla was distressing from France's point of view, for earlier plans had been made with an eye to the creation of an entente between France and Spain in regard to their "Roman policy." Ambassador Nisard, when informed of the Spanish position, regarded it as a defection and advised placing no further trust in the Spanish entente.[3] Meanwhile, in Madrid, Cambon in subsequent conversations with Silvela had determined that the Austrian Ambassador, Count Dubsky, was responsible for blackening Rampolla's image in Spain. Cambon wrote: "It is thus Austria who is charged with pursuing here the plan that

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. Gouv. Int., III (1903). The French Ambassador to Germany prepared the foregoing report for the Foreign Office in January 1903.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Jules Cambon to Delcassé, Madrid, 28 March 1903.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 19 April 1903.

William II is attempting to carry out in Rome, with a view of turning the sympathies of the Sacred College to Germany's favor." More hopefully, Cambon reported that Silvela, though opposed to Rampolla, was nevertheless anxious to act in concert with France in the matter of influencing Leo's successor and had agreed to cooperate fully when the time should come.[1]

These Spanish-French dispositions were barely completed when Leo XIII died. Nisard had first reported the Pope's worsening condition on July 5, and though Leo lived for two weeks after his initial seizure, the outcome of his struggle for life was never seriously in doubt. Nisard requested that the French government inform the French cardinals of its wishes in the matter of the papal succession, and suggested the immediate designation of a "cardinal confidant" to be entrusted with the special instructions of the government of the Republic. The Austrian government had made its dispositions, Nisard reported, and the Italian cardinals were already prepared to attend the first session of the Consistory.[2] M. Barrère, the French Ambassador to Italy, reported that the Italian government and the Austrian government had already chosen their candidates for the papacy. The Italians were known to favor Cardinal Capocelatro, while both Austria and Germany were agreed upon the desirability of Cardinal Vanutelli.[3] Meanwhile, Cambon had succeeded in securing the support of Madrid for Rampolla, thereby triumphing over Austro-German influence. Premier Silvela still thought Rampolla "too friendly with the Jesuits," but the cardinal was acceptable to Spain so long as he refrained from supporting the Carlists.[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. Gouv. Int., III (1903). Letter of Jules Cambon to Delcassé, Madrid, 7 June 1903.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 10 July 1903.

[3] Ibid., Letter of M. Barrère to Delcassé, Rome, 9 July 1903.

In view of the Catholic Church's ancient tradition of independence of secular control, it seems questionable that France and the other European powers should have believed themselves able to exercise much influence over the papal election. In truth, the influence that could be exerted was largely negative rather than positive, and even here there was much doubt as to how efficacious such pressure might be. M. Nisard wrote Delcassé in regard to the question of a possible veto power reserved to the Catholic Great Powers. According to Nisard, this veto was an unwritten, informal, imprescriptible right by which a Catholic power could veto the election of any papal candidate who had earned its ill will. Nisard reported that the veto had been used several times during the nineteenth century, though it had not been employed in 1878 when Leo XIII had been elected. Nisard also reported rumors to the effect that the Austrian Cardinal Golchowski was empowered to use the veto against Rampolla's election. Nisard pointed out, however, that such a veto was not recognized by the Church, and that since the absolute independence of the Conclave was guaranteed by the Italian government, no threats of force could really be valid.[2]

Leo XIII died at 4:00 p.m. on July 20, 1903. As soon as Delcassé was informed of this event, he advised the French cardinals that he would like to see them before they departed for Rome. As he reported it to Nisard, Delcassé's views were clear:

> . . . to see the chair of St. Peter occupied by a Pope persevering in the sage and prudent policy of his predecessor. No one appears

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. Gouv. Int., III (1903). Letter of Jules Cambon to Delcassé, Madrid, 15 July 1903.

[2] *Ibid.*, Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 18 July 1903.

> more capable of following this policy than the man who for so long has applied it with such tact and intelligence, and who, as Secretary of State, has always evidenced the same desire to remain on good terms with France.

The next Pope must, from the French point of view, be either Cardinal Rampolla or "someone designated by him and animated by his spirit."[1] During the following week Delcassé spoke with four cardinals prior to their departure for Rome and found them all favorably disposed to supporting Cardinal Rampolla's candidacy. Delcassé was particularly anxious to make his views known to Cardinal Archbishop Langenieux of Rheims, the Primate of France, who appeared likely to assume the direction of the French cardinals. The Foreign Minister refrained from presenting the French delegation with written instructions, and contented himself with acquainting them with the government's viewpoint.[2] Nisard later reported from Rome that he had received the French cardinals at dinner and had been given assurances that they were concerted in Rampolla's support.[3]

The outcome of the papal election must cast doubt upon the efficacy of all the maneuvering and plotting that preceded it. None of the front-running candidates received even an approximation of the requisite majority of votes. Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto, Bishop of Venice, was elected on the seventh ballot. His name had not even been mentioned as a possible candidate in July. M. Nisard passed on the following information about the activities of the Conclave: Rampolla had received 24 votes on the first ballot, and 29 on the next two. At that point the Cardinal Archbishop of Cracow had arisen and, in the name of Emperor Francis Joseph, pronounced the exclusion of Rampolla. This action appeared to have produced no immediate effect, for on the fourth ballot Rampolla received 30 votes. This proved to be the high point of the Secretary of State's success, however. On subsequent ballots his fortunes steadily declined and Sarto received 50 votes to Rampolla's 10 on the seventh ballot.[1] The French Ambassador in Vienna later reported that the Austrian veto came as a surprise, but was cast at the express command of the Emperor. The Austrian Ambassador at Rome wired Francis Joseph at Ischl that Cardinal Rampolla was a front-running candidate with excellent chances of being elected. The Emperor thereupon requested use of the veto, without bothering to consult his Foreign Minister, who had earlier given assurances that no veto would be exercised by Austria.[2] The French Ambassador in Berlin reported that the outcome of the elections produced as much surprise in Germany as in France, but that in Berlin there was "resounding satisfaction" over Rampolla's failure. It was also suggested that the German Cardinal Kopp had acted in concert with the Austrian cardinal to prevent Rampolla's election.[3]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. Gouv. Int., III (1903). Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 21 July 1903.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 27 July 1903.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 30 July 1903.

It is impossible to assess just how effective the "veto" was in preventing Cardinal Rampolla's elevation to the papacy. It was the opinion of Cardinal Tagliani, Papal Nuncio to Berlin, that Rampolla would not in any case have received the requisite majority.[4] M. Nisard reported that L'Osservatore Romano also discounted the efficacy of a great power veto, terming such an action "historically nothing more than a *de facto* abuse that the Sacred College has put up with out of patient tolerance."[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. Gouv. Int., IV (1903-1907). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 8 August 1903.

[2] *Ibid.*, M. Riverseaux, French Ambassador to Austria, to Delcassé, Vienna, 13 August 1903.

[3] *Ibid.*, M. Bihourd, French Ambassador to Germany, to Delcassé, Berlin, 14 August 1903.

[4] *Ibid.*, Letter of M. Riverseaux to Delcassé, Vienna, 13 August 1903.

The accession of the new Pope, who took the title Pius X, aroused considerable curiosity and speculation in Paris, and Nisard was pressed to provide details and possible insights into the pointiff's character. Little was to be learned. Nisard related that even in Rome Pius X was an obscure figure since he had spent most of his time in attending to his duties in Venice. He was described as affable, but a strict disciplinarian and a good administrator. He was known to advocate social reforms and favored the "social-democratic" movement in Italy.[2] M. Nisard was unable to supply much more information even after several audiences with the Pope. Pius X, unlike Leo XIII, appeared unwilling to discuss the great issues facing the Church. In particular, the Pope had absolutely refrained from all comment concerning the relations of the papacy with France. Nisard related, "to hear him, I would have thought myself in the presence of a good bishop, happy to evidence his benevolence toward one of his flock . . ."[3]

Little was to be learned from such reports, but M. de Navenne, French chargé d'affaires at the Vatican, reported on the Pope's first official allocution given in a Consistory on November 9, 1903. As de Navenne related it, "the Pope declared that the Church's interests required that he be free and appear free, without any subjection in relation to another power, adding that his conscience and his vows obliged him to deplore the grave injustices that the Church had had to suffer."[4]

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. Gouv. Int., IV (1903-1907). Letter of M. Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 28 December 1903.

2. Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 8 August 1903.

3. Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 10 October 1903.

4. Ibid., Letter of de Navenne to Delcassé, Rome, 10 November 1903.

These words were ambiguous enough to be subject to varying interpretations, but their general tone resembled certain of Leo XIII's pronouncements when he wished to refer to the religious situation in France. Only time would show whether the new Pope was cut from the same conciliatory mould as his predecessor. In the interim, the Quai d'Orsay could derive satisfaction from at least one development in papal politics. Pius X chose as his Secretary of State the Spanish prelate Merry del Val, much to the displeasure of the Italian cardinals, who had wished for one of their own number, older and more experienced, to be chosen for this important post.[1] The Austrians could scarcely have been pleased with either the election of Giuseppe Sarto or the appointment of Merry del Val. Sarto was of Venetian origin and therefore could not be expected to be an admirer of Austria, while Merry had been selected by Leo XIII as Nuncio to Vienna, but had been rejected out of hand by the Austrian government because he was unacceptable to the Emperor.[2] If the French had failed to win election for their candidate, they could nevertheless take a perverse pleasure in the knowledge that Pius X was not entirely palatable to their foes in the despised Triple Alliance.

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. Gouv. Int., IV (1903-1907). Letter of de Navenne to Delcassé, Rome, 20 October 1903.

2. Ibid., Letter of de Navenne to Delcassé, Rome, 23 October 1903.

Chapter X

COMBES, WALDECK, AND THE BISHOPS, 1904

The year 1904 witnessed the culminating crisis in church-state relations. Though Combes and Delcassé could not know it in July 1903, the election of Pius X and the appointment of Merry del Val presaged a heightening of the tensions already existing between the government of France and the Vatican. The final rupture of relations was rapidly approaching in the spring of 1904. Though the new pontiff professed high regard for France, he would soon make it clear that he was not prepared to be conciliatory at the expense of endangering the Church's prerogatives. And Pius X was inclined to define those prerogatives more broadly and to defend them more energetically than had his predecessor. In Pius X and Merry del Val, Combes was to discover an intransigence equal to his own.

A great deal of the responsibility for the inflammatory state of France's relations with Rome in 1904 must be placed upon Combes, though to be sure the fault did not lie exclusively with him. Not content with the effects produced by the education decrees of 1902 (which affected only unauthorized teaching congregations), Combes determined to renew his attack upon monastic education. Long a partisan of the old Radical ideal of a "laic monopoly" over education, Combes decided that the only conclusive method of dealing with clerical instruction was to suppress all schools in which monks and nuns were employed. Even authorized teaching orders must be liquidated, and the state would assume the burden of educating that large portion of French youth presently enrolled in monastic schools. Combes prepared a bill embodying these principles, and with little fanfare introduced the measure in the Chamber of Deputies on December 18, 1903. Despite opposition efforts to sidetrack the bill by sending it to a special committee, it was at Combes' insistence sent to the Education Committee of the Chamber, where the Radical majority could at leisure prepare it for debate.[1] In view of the cohesiveness of the anticlerical bloc in the Chamber, little difficulty was anticipated in obtaining approval for the measure. Introduced February 29, 1904, the bill was pushed rapidly through the Chamber of Deputies, where discussion terminated on March 28.

Combes found it necessary to make only two major speeches in support of the measure. On March 7, the Premier spoke to the Chamber in justification of the proposed legislation. He chided the moderate deputies for their tendency to side with the opposition at this critical juncture and placed the question squarely on these emotional grounds: "This time, it is necessary to be decidedly for the congregations and against the republican party, or with the republican party and against the congregations."[2] Combes admitted that while qualified individual French citizens might claim the right to teach, the same right did not appertain to a person "voluntarily separated from the social body and making a profession of having nothing in common with it. . . . As soon as the citizen's personality disappears [in monastic life], so do the citizen's prerogatives."[3] On the following day, Combes gave more explicit support to the bill, replying at some length to critics who had expressed apprehension over the cost of education. He stated that the measure would result in the closing of 3,494 schools. The government possessed statistics to prove that the students from 1,944 of those schools could be immediately absorbed into existing communal public institutions. Buildings could be rented for 354 other schools, 486 school buildings would have to be expanded, and in all, only 631 new school houses would have to be constructed in order to provide for the influx of students whose clerical schools would be closed.[1]

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXXI (18 December, 1903), 214.

[2] Ibid., LXXII (7 March, 1904), 745.

[3] Ibid., p. 748.

The bill passed March 28 by a vote of 316-269, and was subsequently sent through the Senate where it encountered little opposition. The law was promulgated July 7, 1904, and in its final form, it provided that henceforth education of every sort was forbidden to religious orders. All presently authorized teaching orders would be suppressed within ten years, and as of July 7, 1904 they might no longer recruit members in France. Their noviciates, with the exception of those preparing monks for teaching overseas, were declared dissolved.[2] With this rather draconic measure Combes believed that he had effectively solved the question of monastic education for all time. The Law of July 7, however, was destined to have repercussions that were momentous for Combes' government. The passage of the measure brought to a head a crisis in Combes' relations with his predecessor, caused a new "episcopal manifestation" that strained Combes' relations with the Catholic hierarchy, and materially contributed to the final rupture of France's relations with the Vatican.

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1. Annales, Chambre, LXXII (8 March 1904), 775.

2. Le Temps, 8 July 1904, p. 1.

Before turning to a narrative of the events that led to the breach between France and Rome, brief note should be made of the breakdown of communication and cooperation between Combes and Waldeck-Rousseau. The events that were to culminate in Waldeck's repudiation of Combes' anticlerical program had their origins in misgivings that Waldeck began to experience almost as soon as he had relinquished power in 1902. For his part, Combes found it difficult to believe that Waldeck was acting from perfectly sincere motives when he resigned after the parliamentary election. Combes harbored the suspicion that both Waldeck-Rousseau and his former colleagues were desirous of reconstructing the Republican Defense Cabinet after Combes' ministry should have had a respectable period in power.[1] These suspicions gained the status of convictions in August 1902, when Waldeck criticized Combes' procedure for dealing with the unauthorized teaching orders, i.e., outright suppression without regard to distinction or merit. Rumors of Waldeck's opposition reached the press and Combes became alarmed lest these reports should presage an overt attack upon the cabinet by the former Premier and his friends. Accordingly, Combes telephoned Waldeck and was invited to the latter's residence at the Place Beauveau for an interview. In the ensuing conversation, Combes received his predecessor's assurances that criticism did not constitute either a threat or a declaration of war. Rather, Waldeck stated, "it serves as a notice that I am still faithful to my system and that I disapprove of yours."[2] When Combes countered that to the public eye it must seem as though Waldeck had taken up a position in opposition to the cabinet, Waldeck replied, "Not against the cabinet, but against its procedures."[1] To Combes, the cabinet and its procedures were identical, and he reproached Waldeck-Rousseau with inconsistency:

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[1] Combes, *Mon ministère*, pp. 88-90.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

> When you designated me to succeed you, you were aware of my ideas regarding the teaching orders. I had elaborated upon them in your presence at the tribune of the Senate. I was honored to have received your applause during the course of my speech. Better than anyone else, you knew of my determined resistance when I was urged to assume office . . . now what is my position going to be? Your former colleagues, after promising me their complete support, are now turning against me. If I must also defend myself from you, my situation will become odious and intolerable. I realize perfectly the chief cause of the difficulties I am encountering. I am applying a law made by another man, when it would have been much simpler and much more rational if the author of the law had applied it himself.[2]

Combes concluded by offering to resign if Waldeck would resume power, a proposition that Waldeck emphatically declined.[3] The interview was terminated without the two men making any binding agreements; however, Combes felt confident that if an open break should occur, it would not come in 1902 but at some later date.[4]

Waldeck-Rousseau did not regard his own personal position as a pleasant one. Indeed, he was facing a most distasteful dilemma from 1902 until his death in 1904. Waldeck felt to some degree responsible for Combes' anticlerical campaign; after all, Waldeck had been instrumental in bringing Combes to power. (Waldeck's critics, and Combes himself, never wearied of reiterating this fact.) To criticize the cabinet seemed somehow disloyal and unworthy. On the other hand, to keep silent when Combes clearly appeared (in Waldeck's eyes) to be distorting the scope and intention of the Associations Law implied approval of procedures that Waldeck found personally and politically abhorrent. The former Prime Minister expressed his situation very cogently in a letter to Delcassé, describing his interview with Combes in August 1902:

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[1] Combes, _Mon ministère_, p. 90.

[2] _Ibid._, pp. 91-92.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 92.

[4] _Ibid._, p. 93.

> I received Combes last Monday evening . . . and his serenity, in the present circumstances, was a little frightening. The present cabinet has undertaken a task I shunned, and I remain persuaded that it was politically wise to shun it. The agitation that we would have avoided now exists, and it is only beginning. I see in the newspapers—and I do not read the bad ones—that my moderation is now being contrasted with Combes' violence. Other papers place upon me the responsibility for what is happening. I shall do nothing to decline it. To recall our decision and the program we had decided upon would at this time encourage this deplorable agitation and catch between two fires the government, which I want to see triumph over the difficult days that are now preoccupying it. . . . I have avoided and will continue to avoid all interviews and conversations that would lead me to betray the past. This letter is completely personal and I do not wish to be reproached for criticizing my successor with all the freedom of a man who has returned to his tent.[1]

Combes' next—and apparently last—visit to Waldeck-Rousseau occurred in March 1903. In their conversation, the two politicians touched upon the procedure of establishing three categories of congregations for the purpose of according or refusing authorization. In this interview, Combes told Waldeck that he (Combes) had largely been responsible for moderating the intransigent attitude of the parliamentary commission charged with preparing the bills containing authorization requests. The commission, headed by militant anticlerical Fernand Rabier, had favored a bloc rejection of all requests for legalization. It was through Combes' personal intervention that the teaching, preaching, and commercial categories had been established.[2] Combes seemed to think that Waldeck ought to be able to lend his support to this more moderate approach, but Waldeck was not mightily impressed with the idea of categorizing the religious orders. He remarked that "the division of the congregations into these categories is not really better than the commission's first decision of bloc rejection, for the categories are homogeneous only in appearance." Waldeck was especially concerned with the fate of certain orders with "mixed" functions; i.e., preaching orders that also directed hospitals and other charitable services. Combes' three categories seemed too arbitrary to deal effectively or fairly with such congregations.[1] Combes replied that those mixed orders whose teaching or preaching functions were suppressed could still request authorization for their charitable or missionary functions. He concluded, "I am ready to declare categorically that . . . I am prepared to receive these requests favorably."[2] Pressed by Waldeck, Combes stated that he was willing to make this same declaration before Parliament. It is obvious, however, that Waldeck was not satisfied with Combes' assurances, and the interview terminated without Waldeck's offering any promise of support for Combes' policies.

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[1] Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 6 August 1902, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4616.

[2] Handwritten memorandum of Waldeck-Rousseau, 8 March 1903, in ibid.

Nor, indeed, as subsequent events were to demonstrate, was Waldeck prepared to agree with Combes' interpretations and procedures in order to preserve an appearance of "republican solidarity," however desirable that might be. In June 1903, he made one of his increasingly rare public statements and he chose the tribune of the Senate as the place to voice his growing concern over the way the Associations Law was being applied. In a prepared speech, Waldeck observed that his successor was attempting to achieve results from the law that lay outside its scope and quite beyond the purpose envisaged by its author. As before, Waldeck reserved his chief criticism for the procedure of grouping the congregations into arbitrary categories, and he asserted that when the decision was made to establish such categories and to proceed with blanket refusals of authorization, then "the Chamber of Deputies made a new law, which destroyed the previous one."[1] As his strength, both physical and political, waned, Waldeck came at last to believe that "his" Associations Law was being perverted by the Combes government, and in his last speech to the Senate, Waldeck's words echoed a note of nostalgia and evidenced an almost proprietary concern for the law: "Oh, I know, gentlemen, that the Law of 1901 has aged greatly. Many are pleased to criticize its insufficiencies . . . [but] it is not and it has not been impotent. . . . Are you not armed now? You do not think it necessary to do what the Law of 1901 authorized you to do, and you demand to be authorized to do what you cannot do!"[2]

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[1] Handwritten memorandum of Waldeck-Rousseau, 8 March 1903, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4616.

[2] Ibid.

But perhaps the most complete and most eloquent summation of Waldeck's objections to Combes' procedures is found in some unpublished notes that Waldeck had prepared as the basis for a speech he was never to give. This passage demonstrates better than any other his grasp of the possible in politics and his innate sense of history and the historical process:

> Catholicism has reigned supreme for more than fourteen centuries; it has been the power to which all other powers were subordinate, and if it has now lost much of its dominion over souls, it has preserved nearly intact its influence over conventions, customs, and habits. . . .

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[1] René Waldeck-Rousseau, Pour la république (Paris, 1904), p. 462. (Speech of 27 June 1903, Senate.)

[2] Ibid., p. 487. (Speech of 20 November 1903, Senate.) Combes was not the only parliamentarian who considered Waldeck's opposition to the government's anticlerical policies ill-timed. Georges Clemenceau spoke to the Senate just after Waldeck had addressed the body on November 20, and after warmly praising Combes' anticlerical policies, he criticized the former Prime Minister for finding fault with the way the Associations Law was being applied. Clemenceau tartly observed that "M. Waldeck-Rousseau was not thrown out of office; if he wished to apply his law himself, he had the means and the leisure in 1902." (Annales, Sénat, LXIV [20 November 1903], 169.) Alexandre Zévaès credited Clemenceau's intervention on Combes' behalf with keeping the government's majority intact. (Alexandre Zévaès, Clemenceau [Paris, 1949], p. 180.)

> I cannot believe that it is possible to execute properly in the space of a few weeks a law [in this case the Associations Law] that it took thirty years to get through Parliament. . . .[1]

With his legal background, Waldeck could only regard with abhorrence Combes' "misuse" of the Associations Law. The law would have to be enforced, but not in such a way that its basic principles and ideas were ignored or neglected. "When one finds himself faced with carrying out difficult policies," he said in 1903, "there is only one sure method of conduct. It consists in attaching oneself resolutely to the text of the law."[2] This simple statement might stand as the epitaph of Waldeck's political career.

By December 1903, when Combes presented to Parliament his bill for the complete suppression of monastic education, the breach between Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes was complete and public. It was not sensational because Waldeck's public life was virtually terminated and the former Prime Minister did not choose to dramatize his differences with his successor. In private, Waldeck was less restrained and more bitter; he wrote to Alexandre Millerand in 1904 of "the program we carried out together, broad, reforming, and social, having nothing in common with that of the present monomaniac."[3] Waldeck had also confided his growing distrust of Combes' policies to friends at the Elysée. In August 1902, Waldeck had visited Loubet, and upon leaving the presidential residence had confided to Abel Combarieu, Loubet's secretary, that he considered his successor's activities "stupid" and that Combes' enforcement of the law was not at all in accord with the law's purpose.[4] In

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[1] Handwritten note of Waldeck-Rousseau, 1903, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4616.

[2] Waldeck-Rousseau, Pour la république, p. 469. (Speech of 27 June 1903, Senate.)

[3] Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Millerand, Paris, 19 March 1904, in Waldeck-Rousseau Papers, Box 4616.

[4] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 210.

April 1903 Waldeck again called upon Loubet and informed the President that he intended to break with the cabinet. Combarieu wrote: "He [Waldeck] too is very unhappy and is resolved to combat the ministry whose policies and administrative practices are disgusting. He does not wish to be associated with them."[1] In a last letter written in March, 1904, Waldeck held out hope that Combes' days in office were numbered and suggested a course of action for the future: "I am far away from parliamentary life, [but] the cabinet seems to me to be greatly weakened; if dignity were a necessary condition of its existence, it would be dead. On the day that it expires, Mr. President, let me help construct a cabinet with Leygues as Premier."[2]

It is interesting to note that just when Waldeck was making these observations to Loubet, the Combes government was nearly brought down by a surprise maneuver engineered by Alexandre Millerand. On March 17, Millerand arose in the Chamber of Deputies and announced that he wished to interpellate the government about its apparent lack of interest in providing a workable system of workers' retirement benefits. In developing the interpellation, Millerand accused the Combes government of reneging on its principles and implied that Combes' anticlerical activities were primarily designed as a substitute for meaningful labor legislation. The former Minister of Commerce concluded by contrasting Waldeck's philosophy and methods with those of Combes: ". . . at no time, even in the most critical hours, did [Waldeck-Rousseau] separate social action from republican defense."[3]

Combes defended his government against Millerand's charges, but most of his speech was given over to a pointed attack upon Millerand's motivation for deciding to interpellate the government at so critical a time. Combes announced that the interpellation was a thinly veiled power play on the part of Waldeck-Rousseau's colleagues, who wished to overthrow the government and assume direction of affairs.[1]

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[1] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 233.

[2] Ibid., p. 173.

[3] Annales, Chambre, LXII (17 March 1904), 980-982.

The Premier was supported by Jean Jaurès, who seconded Combes' observations in an eloquent speech. Like Combes, the Socialist leader saw unmistakable evidence of ulterior motives behind Millerand's attack upon the government. Jaurès bluntly accused Millerand of deserting the government just when the anticlerical campaign required republican solidarity, and like Combes, Jaurès asserted that personal ambition rather than concern for social reform was behind Millerand's move.[2] Combes' justification of his policy and Jaurès' support proved sufficient to save the cabinet. When the vote was taken on an order of the day favorable to the government, the vote was 284-265—a narrow enough margin, and prophetic of future difficulties for the Combes administration.[3]

Combes appeared unaffected by his falling out with Waldeck and Millerand; he later noted that "Waldeck-Rousseau's reasoning had the weight merely of a personal opinion that was in opposition to the opinion of most republicans."[4] After Waldeck's death in 1904, Combes was prepared to ask Parliament to accord him a state funeral, but was dissuaded from doing so by Etienne Waldeck-Rousseau, who assured Combes that the Waldeck family preferred

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1. Annales, Chambre, LXII, (17 March 1904), 982-983.

2. Ibid., pp. 985-986.

3. Ibid., p. 986.

4. Combes, Mon ministère, p. 146.

a private religious ceremony.[1]

Although Combes professed not to be disturbed by his estrangement from Waldeck-Rousseau, other events were taking shape early in 1904 that were to prove extremely vexing. Beginning innocently enough, these developments were destined to bring church-state relations to a new stage of crisis. The first occurrence resulted from renewed activity on the part of the high French clergy, activity aroused by Combes' introduction of the bill to suppress monastic education. It will be recalled that in 1902 many prelates had signed a petition to Parliament, manifesting their support of the monastic orders' authorization requests. This petition, coming at the inauguration of Combes' ministry, had aroused a storm of controversy and had led to the suspension of the salaries of the prelates responsible for the idea. In 1902, the government had retaliated against the originators of the petition on the grounds that French concordatory law forbade a "collective manifestation" of this nature. In 1904, consequently, the clergy employed different tactics, though the overall strategy remained the same. Four of France's leading prelates addressed letters to Emile Loubet, expressing their anxiety over worsening conditions in the state's relations with the Church. The four churchmen were Cardinal Archbishop Richard of Paris and Cardinal Archbishop Langenieux of Rheims (Primate of France), who wrote a joint letter; Cardinal Archbishop Coullié of Lyon, and the Cardinal Archbishop of Toulouse. These letters were written between January 24 and February 1, 1904; the one composed by Richard and Langenieux was the first to arrive at the Elysée. The tenor of the letters was similar: they complained of religious persecution and intolerance and urged Loubet to intervene on the side of justice.

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 148.

In time, nearly every prelate announced his adherence to one or the other of the three letters. Because the missive composed by Richard and Langenieux received the most publicity and since it was easily the most eloquent of the protests, it is used here for purposes of quotation. Addressing Loubet, the writers accused the government's anticlerical policy of resulting in the

> annihilation of Catholicism in the souls of children through anti-religious instruction and education. Those who present these things to you in another light, who want to persuade you that all these odious acts are merely political measures directed against political enemies, deceive you and abuse your good faith. It is impossible for you—elevated as you are above party and factional agitation—not to be concerned that those who have charge of the education of the people have a rigorous account to settle with God and with posterity. They will have to answer for these thousands of children reared without faith, without morality, without respect. . . . We are fearful for the generation of children who will suffer the fatal influence of education without God.
>
> All the orders' requests for authorization are refused without even being read . . . even the secularized religious are affected, after the dispersal and separation of their religious families . . . and here is the government, requesting from Parliament in the name of the President of the Republic, a law to dissolve all the authorized teaching orders. In the beginning, it was claimed that the secular clergy was to be protected from being overrun by the regular clergy, but now, the way is overtly being prepared for the rupture of relations between church and state, not in order to give liberty to the Church, but to ruin and enslave her.
>
> Our hearts bleed at this spectacle, and we anxiously ask ourselves if you will finally remember, Mr. President, that you owe equal protection to every Frenchman, and if as guardian of our rights and liberties, you will venture an effort to halt this new barbarism—for it is barbarism—which threatens to enslave us all.[1]

As their authors must have known, these letters were provocative in the extreme and were bound to arouse the government to new heights of wrath. The import of the letter quoted above was two-fold. First, it called upon the President of the Republic to undertake active intervention in a question of major political importance, something that all presidents had refrained from doing since MacMahon's ill-advised dissolution of Parliament in 1877.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6101, Suppression des traitements: Paris, Rheims, Toulouse, Lyon. Letter of Richard and Langenieux to Loubet, Paris, 24 January 1904.

Secondly, the letter contained a scathing attack upon the "godless" values of public education, a fact sure to enrage anticlericals and republicans of all stripes. Since the letters were printed in the newspapers, the incident quickly became a matter of controversy, and Combes decided to take retaliatory action. The Premier adopted the same line of reasoning that he had pursued in 1902. Referring the question to the Council of State as an abuse of ecclesiastical prerogative, Combes once again found it expedient to maintain that unlike ordinary citizens, bishops, because of their special natures and duties, could not address themselves to the President. Combes made much of the fact that by writing to Loubet, the writers had

> attempted to put pressure upon the Chief of State in order to incite him to undertake a role beyond that intended for him by the Constitution. If it be admitted that like every citizen, a bishop may address himself by way of petition to the President of the Republic, it must likewise be admitted that the laws and rules of the Republic may be contravened; it is to oppose, in a sense, the irresponsible President to the government which has the confidence of the electorate. . . .[1]

Combes regarded the episode as one of propaganda rather than of conviction, and merely a continuation of the bishops' "manifestation" of 1902. He recommended that the Council issue a declaration of abuse.[2]

The press treated the issue in a predictable way. Catholic papers publicized the letters and actively solicited the adherence of other prelates, while anticlerical papers took much the same view as did Combes, with the exception that their language was generally a good deal more vehement than the Premier's. La Libre Parole listed sixty-four adhesions to the letters by February 18 and scolded the bishops who had been tardy in issuing declarations of support.[3] L'Action, on the other hand, termed the bishops factious and called for immediate separation of church and state,[1] while Le Rappel condemned Combes' timidity in merely referring the bishops to the Council of State rather than taking sterner measures.[2] La Lanterne found Combes' measures "derisory . . . the Richards, Coulliés, etc. will merely return to their dioceses and continue to abuse the government."[3]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6101, Suppression des traitements: Paris, Reims, Toulouse, Lyon. Combes to the Vice-President of the Council of State, Paris, 29 February 1904.

[2] Ibid.

[3] La Libre Parole, 18 February 1904, p. 1.

It was not altogether unreasonable that the four prelates should have addressed themselves to Emile Loubet. It was well known that Loubet was a good deal more conservative in his views on the Church than was Emile Combes, and moreover, Mme. Loubet was a devout Catholic who was reportedly much disturbed about the treatment accorded the religious orders over the past five years.[4] As a matter of record, there is some evidence to indicate that President Loubet was not at all happy with Combes' anticlerical measures, though his role as President necessitated his remaining virtually aloof from political controversies. According to Combarieu, Loubet had regarded the wholesale suppression of orders and schools as a dangerous move, but since 1902, all signs had pointed to the fact that such draconic measures satisfied a majority of the Chamber of Deputies.[5] Loubet's position was at best a tenuous one from the constitutional viewpoint; ever since the resignation of MacMahon in 1879, French presidents had played little more than a ceremonial role in government. Loubet apparently did not think it befitted either his duty or his position to work publicly against Combes or his policy, but rather patiently waited for some unexpected hazard of French parliamentary life to bring down the government and allow the formation of a less sectarian ministry.[1] Loubet's unwillingness to involve himself in political intrigues and maneuvers that did not accord with his rather negative conception of presidential prerogative explains why he made no reply and gave no sign of reaction to the prelates' letters. Doubtless the ecclesiastics had known when they composed their missives that there was virtually nothing the President would or could do to halt the anticlerical campaign. One is consequently inclined to agree with Combes' observation that the bishops were "addressing themselves not to the President of the Republic, but to all French Catholics. Before arriving at their destination . . . these letters were published in all the newspapers and put together in a pamphlet, thereby forming an instrument of propaganda."[2]

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[1] L'Action, 1 February 1904, p. 1.

[2] Le Rappel, 3 February 1904, p. 2.

[3] La Lanterne, 6 March 1904, p. 1.

[4] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, pp. 209, 284.

[5] Ibid., p. 209.

The letters and the government's reaction did not escape notice at Rome. Pius X, addressing the cardinals on the occasion of the Feast of St. Joseph, defended the prelates' actions on the grounds that they were "making use of their rights as citizens and had in mind the interest of the nation as well as that of religion."[3] Nisard reported the next day that the Pope's reference to these events had taken most observers by surprise, and that there was by no means universal approbation for it in ecclesiastical circles.[4]

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[1] Combarieu, _Sept ans à l'Elysée_, p. 210.

[2] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 6101, Suppression des traitements: Paris, Reims, Toulouse, Lyon. Letter of Combes to the Vice-President of the Council of State, Paris, 29 February 1904.

[3] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 18 March 1904.

[4] _Ibid._, Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 19 March 1904.

The French government lost no time in lodging a protest with the Vatican on the grounds that Pius X had publicly criticized "acts of domestic policy, acts that in no way touch upon the dispositions of the Concordat and are consequently beyond all foreign authority."[1] When Merry del Val contested the principles of the French protest, stating that "it is not possible that the Head of the Church refrain from lifting his voice on behalf of priests and monks placed hors de loi,"[2] Combes intervened personally in the dispute and ordered the presentation of a second protest. "It is not by way of the press or public discourse that observations formulated by the Vatican should be presented," he observed.[3] Thus another relatively minor incident was magnified out of proportion and left its residue of bitterness and ill will.

In the meantime, while the "affair of the letters" was preoccupying both the government of France and the Vatican, another affair was blowing up from its inception as a minor matter into an issue of prime importance. Two bishops who were not among the first rank either in the importance of their sees or in their personal influence suddenly and unexpectedly became the storm center of a major controversy between France and Rome. The two bishops were Mgr. Le Nordez of Dijon and Mgr. Géay of Laval.

Bishop Le Nordez had for some time been the focal point of internal strife in his diocese, but it was only in early 1904 that the government took an active interest in his position. Le Nordez was one of those prelates whose political predilections seemed solidly republican and his habit of conforming always to government policy had not made him popular with conservative and Ultramontane elements in the Diocese of Dijon. Mgr. Le Nordez had established himself in his diocese in February 1899, and had immediately expressed his desire to avoid all conflicts with the government of France. Forthwith he had suspended intemperate clerics who had used their pulpits or their organs of opinion to express political views. This course of action had led the bishop headlong into conflict with certain clergymen under his supervision, many of whom had been in the diocese for a long time and who consequently were in a good position to make matters difficult for the new prelate. Accordingly, the administration of Le Nordez had been marked by factionalism and controversy of a sort that had been detrimental to the Church's prestige in and around Dijon. In 1903, for example, the bishop was accused by his enemies of having misused funds raised to erect a statue of Bossuet, and a little later he was even accused of having confirmed his own illegitimate son. Le Nordez did not sign the bishops' petition in 1902, nor did he support any of the letters of 1904. His enemies had made much of this obvious absence of zeal. Despite opposition, however, the bishop had been able to maintain his position and dignity until 1904.[1] Then the situation in Dijon suddenly aroused the interest and attention of both the Ministry of Cults and the Vatican, and Mgr. Le Nordez, hitherto obscure, became an important pawn in a struggle of great intensity between Paris and Rome.

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 20 March 1904.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 21 March 1904.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 21 March 1904.

In February 1904, Le Nordez became the object of an intensified campaign of opposition headed by Abbé Roblot and Abbé Bizouard, both members of the diocesan clergy. According to a report prepared by the Prefect of the Department of the Côte d'Or, these two men were responsible for inaugurating the difficulties leading to the bishop's downfall.[1] Trouble began at the Seminary of Dijon. Incited by some of their professors (members of the Order of St. Sulpice, shortly to be dissolved), a few of the seminarists were insubordinate to Le Nordez and the bishop suspended five of them and sent them home. All five had been scheduled for ordination within a few days. As a gesture of defiance, sixty other students left the seminary; only about fifteen remained.[2] Combes' reaction to this development was decisive. He ordered that the "fugitives" (as he called them) who were subject to military service have their deferments revoked and that they be immediately drafted into the armed forces.[3] News of this development brought the "fugitives" back to Dijon and they were readmitted to the seminary. Much to Combes' vexation, Le Nordez reinstated all the students, even the five whom he himself had suspended; the Premier thought that the dissidents had been allowed to escape their just punishment and would doubtless cause further trouble.[4]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1962, Affaire Le Nordez. Report of the Prefect of the Department of the Côte d'Or to Combes, Dijon, 7 October 1904.

Combes formulated this pessimistic opinion on the basis of a report he had received a few days earlier. This document had been prepared by the Comptroller-General of the Ministry of the Interior, who had been dispatched to Dijon to investigate conditions there. The report, submitted on March 2, indicated that the forces opposing Mgr. Le Nordez were powerful and well entrenched. This document stressed the following points: Abbé Bizouard was behind all of the bishop's past difficulties, and he had inspired the recent troubles at the seminary. Bizouard had never forgiven Le Nordez for what he regarded as incursions upon his position and prerogatives, and had started a slander campaign against the bishop, even accusing him of Freemasonry. The fact that Le Nordez had attempted to obey the Associations Law by closing unauthorized chapels in the diocese had given Bizouard an additional weapon. Moreover, Bizouard enjoyed a local reputation for saintliness that made it possible for him to undertake his activities without arousing hostility or suspicion. The revolt at the seminary was conceived by Bizouard and executed with the aid of Abbé Roblot, a young and dynamic priest, who directed a local Catholic patronage in Dijon. Professors at the seminary were also in the conspiracy to ruin Le Nordez. The fruits of this campaign had become manifest when the students had revolted. The tenor of this report was that further difficulties could be expected in the diocese.[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1962, Affaire Le Nordez. Report of the Prefect of the Department of the Côte d'Or to Combes, Dijon, 7 October 1904.

[2] Ibid., Letter of the Prefect of the Department of the Côte d'Or to Combes, Dijon, 24 February 1904.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Combes to General André, Minister of War, Paris, 25 February 1904.

[4] Ibid., Letter of Combes to Le Nordez, Paris, 6 March 1904.

Combes had no difficulty in finding in the campaign against Le Nordez a sufficient cause for lodging a protest with the Vatican. In Combes' view, the true source of the agitation surrounding the Bishop of Dijon was not to be found within the diocese. It was in Rome that all the bishop's difficulties originated, and the agitation at Dijon concealed a larger design than merely discrediting the bishop. Writing to request Delcassé to lodge a complaint with Merry del Val, Combes described the larger issues at stake:

> At Dijon, as well as at Laval, it is a matter of impugning the integrity of a bishop who does not wish to be associated with the plans of parties hostile to the government of the Republic, and of obtaining the resignation of the suspected bishop. You are already

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1962, Affaire Le Nordez. Rapport officiel du Comptrolleur-général de l'Intérieur sur l'affaire au Seminaire à Dijon. Dijon, 24 mars, 1904.

> aware of the situation by means of which the Court of Rome, or the Nunciature at any rate, is seeking to annihilate the right of nomination given the French government by the Concordat. The question posed today is one of discovering if once a nomination is made, cabals and demonstrations like those occurring at Laval and Dijon will suffice to revoke this nomination and render the government's rights purely illusory.[1]

The anti-Le Nordez campaign, as the Direction of Cults had predicted, did indeed wax more intensive. Reports began to circulate at Dijon that the bishop had been suspended from his spiritual functions by the Pope and that in consequence, his sacerdotal acts were no longer valid.[2] Though the bishop denied this report, it was apparently believed by many of the faithful, for scheduled confirmation ceremonies had to be postponed when only a few of the children to be confirmed appeared at the appointed hour. To add to the scandal of this occasion, when Le Nordez arrived at the church, Abbé Bizouard would not receive him at the door, but instead concealed himself in the organ enclosure. Bizouard and Roblot were considered responsible for the cancellation of the ceremony.[3]

The report of Le Nordez's suspension was false, but the bishop wrote to Dumay that he had indeed been the recipient of a letter from Merry del Val instructing him to come to Rome immediately for the purpose of airing the difficulties surrounding his administration at Dijon. Le Nordez had not obeyed this summons, feeling that "the results of an interview with the Pope did not appear advantageous," and he had heard nothing further on that score. However, he had been informed by other Vatican sources that no further favors could be awarded the diocesan clergy until the situation in

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1962, Affaire Le Nordez. Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, no date (probably 10-11 March, 1904).

[2] Ibid., Letter of the Prefect of the Department of the Côte d'Or to Combes, Dijon, 24 March 1904 (confidential).

[3] Ibid., Letter of the Prefect of the Department of the Côte d'Or to Combes, Dijon, 13 June 1904.

Dijon had been cleared up. Le Nordez assured Dumay that he had no intention of going to Rome, but pointed out that "my enemies want me to go there, and will lose no opportunity to claim that I am going as a penitent or as one condemned."[1]

In June the affair took yet another turn. Combes learned that Mgr. Lorenzelli, the Nuncio, had transmitted to Le Nordez a papal order decreeing the suspension of all future ordinations in his diocese. It might seem that Combes could not legally contest the right of the Vatican to take punitive or disciplinary action against its own clergy, however distasteful such procedures might appear. However, the concordatory legislation, a veritable Pandora's box in church-state relations for years, provided the government with a point of attack. It must be remembered that bishops were nominated by the state and paid by the state and that in the eyes of the state, prelates retained a political aspect that rendered them civil servants of a sort. As Combes put it, "It is inadmissable that the Holy See can take—without reference to and in spite of the French government, regarding a bishop regularly named following the conventions prescribed by the Concordat—measures aimed at nothing less than diminishing the prerogatives of the bishop and inflicting a sort of partial deposition upon him. That is manifestly a violation of the Concordat." Combes also pointed out that the Nuncio had no privilege of corresponding directly with French bishops.[2]

Le Nordez made an appointment to appear at the Direction of Cults on July 19 but it is not clear whether he kept the appointment, and if he did, there is no record of what ~~transpired~~ occurred. At any rate, the bishop came to

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1962, AffaireLe Nordez. Letter of Le Nordez to M. Dumay, Dijon, 24 May 1904.

[2] *Ibid.*, Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 20 June 1904.

Paris during the week of July 12-19, for he wrote Dumay a letter dated in Paris, relating his receipt of a new letter from Merry del Val (dated July 9) which effectively suspended the bishop from his ecclesiastical functions.[1] This letter obviously shook Le Nordez in his intention of not going to Rome, for he left France on the morning of July 27. The bishop did not confer with Combes or Dumay about his decision. Rather he posted a letter to Combes the night before his departure.[2] A report from Dijon indicated that Le Nordez had decided to go to Rome after receipt of a letter from Merry del Val on July 25, "very amiable in tone," and that the bishop had felt that his best course was to go to Rome while conditions there appeared favorable to him. According to this source, Le Nordez was evasive when questioned about his destination, and replied that he was on his way to Geneva.[3]

The government suspended the bishop's salary on July 29 because he had left France without obtaining permission from the Direction of Cults.[4] After his arrival in Rome, Le Nordez went into seclusion for a month. Then, on September 2, he submitted a letter of resignation to Combes on the grounds that he could no longer fulfill his duties to the Church or to the state.[5] The resignation was not accepted by the government. For all practical and legal purposes, Le Nordez would remain bishop in the government's eyes and would continue to be responsible for his diocese until a new bishop should be named for Dijon.[1] Le Nordez did not attempt to return to Dijon when he arrived in France in late September, but retired instead to Huberville, where he owned a "modest property."[2] The government took little further notice of him, and the Le Nordez affair came to a quiet conclusion.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1962, Affaire Le Nordez. Letter of Le Nordez to Dumay, Paris, 19 July 1904.

[2] Ibid., Note of M. Dumay, 27 July 1904.

[3] Ibid., Telegram of the Special Commissioner at Dijon to the Ministry of the Interior, Dijon, Gare Dijon, 27 July 1904, 4:45 p.m.

[4] Ibid., Letter of Combes to Le Nordez, Paris, 29 July 1904.

[5] Ibid., Letter of Le Nordez to Combes, Rome, 2 September 1904.

Curious to relate, the agitation surrounding the Bishop of Dijon was not unique. In effect, the Le Nordez affair was but half of a dual controversy concerning the episcopacy that had begun earlier and came to a head in 1904. Mgr. Géay, Bishop of Laval, was also a storm center and his diocese witnessed a number of incidents strikingly similar to those occurring in Dijon. Like Le Nordez, Géay was destined to become a pawn moved at will by stronger personalities in Paris and Rome. In the Géay affair, however, the conflict was sharpened. Combes, defeated in his attempt to preserve Le Nordez as Bishop of Dijon and thereby uphold the government's position, was doubly determined not to be humbled in Géay's case. Though the Géay affair was going on at the same time as the Le Nordez affair, it may be considered in many respects as an extension of the latter, since Géay offered Combes a means of avenging himself upon Rome after the Vatican had frightened or persuaded Le Nordez to resign.

Like Le Nordez, Géay was known as a "republican bishop," and though his political sentiments may have gratified the Direction of Cults, they did not endear the bishop to the conservative and reactionary groups within his diocese. Mgr. Géay had been the subject of discussion between Cardinal Rampolla and M. Nisard in 1901, when Rampolla stated that Géay had lost "the authority and prestige indispens~~i~~able to the exercise of his mission," and implied that the Vatican would welcome the government's assistance in removing Géay from his position.[1] Géay attributed his unpopularity and the difficulties attendant upon it to the work of the royalists of his diocese. Writing to Combes in 1902, just after the promulgation of the governmental decrees affecting the religious orders and their schools, Géay remarked:

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[1] Arch. Nat. F19 1962, Affaire Le Nordez. Note of M. Dumay, 5 September 1904.

[2] *Ibid.*, Letter of Le Nordez to Dumay, Huberville, 27 October 1904.

> Oh, if you only knew, your Excellency, how dangerous the monarchists are—disloyal, liars, clever. . . . If you knew of the immense federation they have formed across France, among men, women, and children. Their plan is always to disqualify their chief enemy, to dishonor him through the most monstrous outrages. . . . The little people of my diocese have up to now, like the monks themselves, resisted the violent appeals launched by the nobility of the region. The movements that are now taking shape are uniquely provoked by the royalists.[2]

It is interesting to note that Waldeck-Rousseau had concurred wholeheartedly with Géay's appraisal of the situation in the diocese. The Premier agreed that the ultra-Catholic, royalist parties were behind the accusations and false reports that must have reached Rampolla's ears. Waldeck ordered Delcassé to make it known to Rampolla "that the government will never lend a hand in dispossessing this prelate as long as there is no proof of his unworthiness."[3] Events of the next year and a half did little to pacify the malcontents of Laval, and by 1904 Géay had become the focus of a great agitation that was to interest both Paris and Rome.

In June 1904, Géay sent to the Direction of Cults a copy of a letter addressed to him from Rome by Cardinal Vanutelli, commanding Géay's voluntary resignation from his position. This was not the first such summons the prelate had received, but this one contained a threat of penalties to be

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, IV (1904). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 17 June 1901.

2. Arch. Nat. F^{19} 2003, Papers de M. Dumay, Directeur des Cultes. Letter of Géay to Combes, Laval, 29 July 1902.

3. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège. Evêques français, 1897-1907. Letter of Waldeck-Rousseau to Delcassé, Paris, 1 August 1901.

imposed if Géay refused to obey. The nature of these penalties was not stated, but Géay was given one month in which to resign. The letter was dated May 17; Géay informed the government of its contents within the week.[1]

Upon receipt of this document, Combes decided to have Delcassé take up the matter with Rome. Combes termed Vanutelli's command

> an undisguised pressure exercised upon a bishop named by the French government under the terms provided by the Concordat. The person who sent the letter is unknown to us; moreover, the acts of the Roman Congregation of the Holy Office--in whose name this person claims to be acting--are without weight in the eyes of French law. . . . Therefore make it known to the Holy See that if the document in question and all similar documents which might have been sent to other French bishops are not at once disavowed and withdrawn, the government will immediately take the measures warranted by this situation.[2]

Géay's position in his diocese was being steadily undermined by his opponents. Géay blamed especially a certain Abbé Batard, leagued with the Jesuits and royalists of the diocese, for stirring up new troubles for him at Rome.[3] Géay had long been disposed to regard this particular combination of Jesuits and royalists with the greatest suspicion, and perhaps was even disposed to magnify it beyond its just proportions. However, the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne shared the prelate's views in this particular instance. He reported that the Jesuits were indeed involved in the conspiracy to rid Laval of its bishop, and indicated that certain French bishops had found cause in Géay's pro-government policies to complain of him at Rome. The prefect also related that pressure was being put upon Géay to go to Rome at an early date. It was inferred that the purpose was to get Géay in Rome, where, isolated from governmental support, his resignation could be forced from him. When Géay learned that the Pope desired his presence in Rome, he was inclined to leave immediately. The prefect dissuaded him from undertaking so important a step without first consulting with the Direction of Cults. Géay agreed.[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of Cardinal Vanutelli to Mgr. Géay, Rome, Chambres du Saint-Office, 17 May 1904 (French translation of the Latin original).

[2] *Ibid.*, Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 25 May 1904.

[3] *Ibid.*, Letter of Géay to Dumay, Laval, 16 June 1904.

Bishop Géay was not a strong personality. His mind was usually made up for him by whomever he last saw or spoke with. By June, Géay was bordering upon a state of confusion that became more acute as he was subjected to increasing pressures from all sides. The principal participants in the struggle over the bishop were Combes and Dumay, determined to prevent Géay's resignation or his departure for Rome, and Merry del Val, equally intent upon obtaining Géay's resignation in order to uphold the Church's right to discipline and govern its personnel. Lesser actors in the drama (or comedy) were Abbé Barrier, Géay's vicar-general, and the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne, both of whom took their stand with the government and used all their influence to keep Géay's spirits bolstered as his conflict with Rome became more desperate. Bishop Géay was little more than a pawn, maneuvered at will by the more powerful protagonists in a game he little understood or appreciated. But, as a symbol Géay was significant; maintained in office by the government in open defiance of Rome's express commands, he justified the state's claim of pre-eminence in the selection and discipline of French prelates. Conversely, forced to go to Rome and resign his powers, he could be useful in the Vatican's attempt to assert its preponderant role in the governance of the Church of France.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne to Combes, Laval, 18 June 1904.

Cardinal Merry del Val, having seized the initiative concerning Géay, never abandoned it. When Vanutelli's letter failed to bring the bishop to heel because of the government's intervention, Merry himself undertook to direct future correspondence. On July 4, Géay received a letter written by Merry on July 2 and was sufficiently frightened by its tone that he decided to leave for Paris immediately to confer with Dumay.[1] Géay was given until July 19 to appear in Rome. Failing that, he would lose his powers of ordination and jurisdiction; i.e., in Géay's own words, he would be deposed. The distraught bishop appealed to Combes to use his authority to secure an "express revocation" of the comminatory clause introduced in Merry's letter of July 2. Géay wrote, "If my clergy learns of this clause, after July 19 it will pay no more attention to me than to a cat."[2]

It is not clear just what sort of authority Géay presumed Combes to have that he might secure a revocation of the comminatory clause, particularly in view of the strained nature of France's relations with Rome in the summer of 1904. It is obvious, however, that before the government could initiate any action in that regard, Merry del Val fired another epistolary salvo that sent Abbé Barrier hurrying back to the Ministry of Cults. Barrier reported the receipt of a new, "ultra-comminatory" letter and requested an audience with Dumay for July 13. It is not clear whether Géay accompanied Barrier back to Paris; he does not seem to have done so since Barrier indicated that he himself would be the bearer of Merry's letter.[3]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of Abbé Barrier, vicar-general of the Diocese of Laval, to Dumay, Laval, 4 July 1904.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Géay to Combes, Paris, 7 July 1904. Since there is no copy of Merry's letter available, its contents must be gleaned from Géay's comments.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Barrier to Dumay, Laval, 12 July 1904.

All that Combes could do was to dispatch an indignant note to Delcassé, complaining that obviously the government's earlier protest had availed nothing. Combes reported the threats of suspension directed against Géay. He further noted that he had received Géay and had "invited him to remain in France, in accordance with our concordatory rights . . ." Combes concluded:

> The persistence of these acts [against Géay] constitutes a real attempt at provocation and a denunciation of the Concordat by the public defiance of the rights it confers upon the French government. It will be fitting to consider, in the next Council of Ministers, measures to be taken to safeguard the dignity of the French government. . . . I cannot leave you ignorant of the fact that I have decided that if these letters are not purely and simply withdrawn, to propose to you the rupture of our diplomatic relations with the Holy See.[1]

Combes' protest did not result in any sort of retraction on the part of the Vatican, and informed sources saw no prospect of such a gesture. Rome viewed the Géay affair as entirely one of internal discipline; the bishop had no alternative but to obey Pius X and appear in Rome. Threats of rupturing relations would have no effect upon the Pope. For some time he had been expecting just such an eventuality. Indeed, the Pope was represented as having come to regard the Concordat as an instrument of political supervision over exclusively ecclesiastical affairs.[2]

In the meantime, the pressure upon Mgr. Géay was being perceptibly increased and the bishop daily wavered upon the brink of indecision. Combes was warned by Barrier and the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne that Bishop Géay was apparently resolved to submit his resignation to the Pope. Alarmed, Combes instructed the prefect:

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of Combes to Delcassé, Paris, 13 July 1904.

[2] Ibid., Telegraphic despatch to Le Matin, Rome, 17 July 1904, 10:10 p.m.

> I authorize you to use all your influence with the bishop to dissuade him from sending his letter [of resignation]. By resigning, he would admit his guilt and would forfeit every claim upon the government's good will; let him take care not to deliver himself into his enemies' hands. The government will support him energetically. The Council of Ministers will never recognize the validity of an act of the Vatican taken without being first submitted to the approval of the civil power. We have declared as much to Rome, and we do not think that the Vatican can contest this principle.[1]

The prefect visited Géay on July 20, and later reported that the bishop, having received the government's assurances of support, appeared quite firm in his decision to hold fast. The prefect concluded by expressing a well-founded doubt: "This prelate is of so weak and changeable a character that I still have qualms."[2] Abbé Barrier, in kinder words, expressed the same view of "poor dear Monseigneur, who, with a confidence a thousand times abused, passes so easily from one extreme to another."[3]

Despite their mutual misgivings, both Barrier and the prefect kept up their counter-pressure upon Géay. Barrier even went so far as to destroy a telegram Géay had secretly prepared announcing his departure for Rome.[4] As for the bishop, he suffered agonies of doubt despite his announced resolution to hold firm against injunctions from Rome. Mgr. Géay lived in mortal dread of excommunication for his disobedience. He wrote Dumay: "Oh, how I suffer at the thought that I might be excommunicated. Everyone keeps me isolated. I have already suffered so much. . . . When will this martyrdom end?"[5]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Telegram of Combes to the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne, Paris, 19 July 1904, 5:45 p.m.

[2] Ibid., Letter of the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne to Combes, Laval, 20 July 1904.

[3] Ibid., Letter of Barrier to Dumay, Laval, 20 July 1904.

[4] Ibid., Letter of Barrier to Dumay, Laval, 23 July 1904.

[5] Ibid., Letter of Géay to Dumay, Laval, 29 July 1904.

The bishop had every intention of bringing his martyrdom to a speedy conclusion, but he preferred to do so on terms advantageous to himself. On July 31 he directed a tearful letter to Dumay, requesting permission to resign immediately. "By accepting my resignation," he wrote, "you will snatch me from the fate that awaits me in Rome. . . . No, you will never allow me to fall into the hands of those Italian monks, those Spaniards and Saxons who compose the Tribunal, and who have already received the price of my head." But resigning would deprive him of all financial resources; therefore he was prepared to ask the government to maintain his regular salary and grant him an additional 9,000 francs a year as an "indemnity" for his troubles. Géay reminded Dumay that many bishops hostile to the government had received pensions upon retirement. "Let me go," he pleaded, "I will soon be sixty; I will not cost the state much for very long." Géay notified Dumay that he would appear in Paris the following day for an interview.[1]

No record exists of the meeting between Géay and Dumay, but it is obvious from the tenor of Géay's subsequent correspondence that he received neither permission to resign nor the promise of financial satisfaction. In early August he importuned Dumay once more, and the tone of his letter indicated that he had again decided to send his resignation to Rome. The bishop expressed his apprehension that dreadful ecclesiastical sanctions were about to be imposed upon him: "Unless you are quite certain that I shall escape Roman censure, it would be best that I resign before I am censured. These measures could go so far as to deprive me of the power to say mass. I would be regarded as an outcast. . . . Please grant my request and give me the pension awarded to bishops who have fought the good fight."[1]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of Géay to Dumay, Laval, 31 July 1904.

But the government could do little to relieve Géay of his apprehensions. The Vatican had refused to withdraw the comminatory letters and denied that its attempts to bring Géay to heel constituted any sort of attack upon the Concordat. Merry del Val did offer a rather limited gesture of good will, however; he extended for one month the period in which Géay must appear in Rome.[2] Consequently there was to be no question of the Vatican's yielding on this point. Obviously, Géay had little to hope for from the government after this. He made his dispositions accordingly.

On August 10, Barrier told Géay that he had learned from Combes that if Géay resigned without permission from the government, there could be no prospect of his receiving a pension. Géay received this information without a show of emotion. Later in the evening, the bishop received a letter from one of his closest friends, a certain Abbé Guy. Guy urged Géay to make his peace with Rome immediately and offered to place his considerable fortune entirely at Géay's disposal if the bishop would depart for Rome. With the prospect of financial aid, the bishop's gravest qualms were dissipated. Abbé Barrier was fully cognizant of this fact and warned Dumay that though it seemed unlikely that Géay would go to Rome, the Direction of Cults might expect a resignation momentarily.[3]

The Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne was instructed to see Géay at once in order to "comfort him."[4] After witnessing so many of Géay's attacks of doubt and vacillation, however, the prefect had reached a point in his relations with the bishop at which sympathy had given way to vexation and disgust, and he concluded that "really, we must expect anything from a man who has neither character nor energy . . ."[1] This statement was to prove prophetic.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of Géay to Dumay, Laval, 2 August 1904.

[2] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VIII (1904). Letter of M. de Courcel, Chargé d'affaires at the Vatican, to Delcassé, Rome, 26 July 1904.

[3] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of Abbé Barrier to Dumay, Laval, 11 August 1904.

[4] Ibid., Letter of Combes to the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne, Paris, 12 August 1904.

Mgr. Géay left Laval on August 23 after telling Abbé Barrier that he was going to Saulges, where he owned some property. Three days later, Barrier reported to Paris that he had received no news from Géay, and the correspondence he had forwarded to Saulges remained unanswered.[2] The reason soon became apparent. The prefect in Laval learned through a news service on August 29 that Géay had arrived in Rome and had already been received by Merry del Val. The trip to Saulges had merely been a ruse to allay suspicion; Mgr. Géay had left the country by stealth and the intent had been well concealed.[3]

Géay's own account of his decision to go to Rome reached Barrier August 30. The bishop reported that he had arrived in Rome on August 27, impelled by his conscience "in order to show the Holy Father the sincerity of the motives that brought me toward the Head of the Church. I set out not only out of obedience and to defend my cause, but also in order to express to His Holiness my profound regret at having pained His paternal heart. . . ."[4] Barrier's only comment on this revelation was, "For some time I have known that for Monseigneur's part, it would all end like this."[5]

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of the Prefect of La Mayenne to Combes, Laval, 12 August 1904.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Barrier to Dumay, Laval, 27 August 1904.

[3] Ibid., Telegram of the Prefect of the Department of La Mayenne to Combes, Laval, 29 August 1904, 7:56 p.m.

[4] Ibid., Letter of Géay to Barrier, Rome, 28 August 1904.

[5] Ibid., Letter of Barrier to Dumay, Laval, 30 August 1904.

Géay wrote Barrier from Cannes, where he had stopped over after leaving Rome. "I learned a great deal at Rome," he declared, "and it is indeed the Republic that they wish to overturn. . . . I have really been bought and sold . . . [but] the government could easily turn a blind eye to the facts and leave me my salary."[1] Upon receipt of this letter, Barrier wrote ruefully to Dumay: "This poor Monseigneur, though very good, is really impossible. For money, he would plunge not only the Republic, but the whole universe, into inextricable embarrassment. . . . He thinks only of himself, money, and personal position. . . ."[2]

Géay's salary was officially suspended as of August 24, the date of his unauthorized departure for Rome.[3] Géay submitted his official resignation to the government on September 12.[4] On September 14, Mgr. François, Archbishop of Tours, transmitted to Combes official notice of Géay's resignation at Rome.[5] Combes informed Mgr. François that Rome's direct communication with him was irregular under concordatory law, and that the government consequently could take no official notice of the information contained in it.[6] And so, on this curiously familiar note, the Géay affair ended. As in the Le Nordez case, Rome, possessing the capacity for inflicting more dreaded punishments and offering more attractive rewards, had triumphed.

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[1] Arch. Nat. F^{19} 1961, Affaire Evêque de Laval. Letter of Géay to Barrier, Cannes, 6 September 1904.

[2] *Ibid.*, Letter of Barrier to Dumay, Laval, 8 September 1904.

[3] *Ibid.*, Letter of Combes to Géay, Paris, 29 August 1904.

[4] *Ibid.*, Letter of Géay to Combes, Cannes, 12 September 1904.

[5] *Ibid.*, Letter of Mgr. François, Archbishop of Tours, to Combes, Tours, 14 September 1904.

[6] *Ibid.*, Letter of Combes to François, Paris, 17 September 1904.

But the triumph was to prove hollow, for Combes had emerged from this latest conflict with Rome more convinced than before that Pius X and Merry del Val were engaging in unconcordatory maneuvers to reduce the state's rights of nomination and supervision of the high clergy. Rome's victory in the Le Nordez and Géay affairs infuriated radical anticlericals in Paris and contributed materially to the rupture of diplomatic relations with France.

Chapter XI

THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN: THE BREACH WITH ROME

The controversies that centered around the bishops of Laval and Dijon were vexing and played their part in provoking the final crisis in French church-state relations. But even while the French government was protesting the Vatican's interference in the state's power of nomination and supervision of the episcopacy, an even greater furor was being generated by a visit that President Emile Loubet paid to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy. Just why Loubet's voyage to Rome should have heightened the crisis existing between France and the Vatican will soon be made clear. Like most of the factors complicating the conduct of church-state relations, this one had roots that reached back into the past, to the time when the Kingdom of Italy had been finally unified by its acquisition of Rome in 1870.

The events that precipitated a breach between the papacy and the new Italian kingdom are well known and do not require retelling in detail. At the risk of some oversimplification, the pertinent facts are these: Upon the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the French troops garrisoned in Rome for the Pope's protection since the disturbances of 1848 were recalled to France for active duty against Prussia. French solicitude for the welfare of the Pope had been for over twenty years the major deterrent to the Italian state's acquisition of the historic capital of the peninsula. After the withdrawal of French troops, the Italian government immediately seized the opportunity of crowning the edifice of national unification, and Italian soldiers occupied the city almost as soon as the French abandoned it. Pope Pius IX was outraged by this unilateral abrogation of his historic rights. Rome had been the most important part of the papal domain since the early Middle Ages. While other portions of the Patrimony of St. Peter had slipped away because of secular encroachments, the Eternal City had remained in the Pope's possession. This fact made it all the more unlikely that the Pope would view with equanimity the loss of this last vestige of his temporal power to the usurpations of the secular state. Lacking the physical means to defend his possessions, Pius IX withdrew into the precincts of the Vatican Palace and dramatically proclaimed himself "the prisoner of the Vatican." Though this action was completely unproductive of political gains, it did serve to dramatize the Pope's contention that he had been forcibly and illegally deprived of his historic territories and prerogatives. Needless to say, the papacy did not establish relations with the Italian government. Indeed, it did what it could to prevent Catholics from participating in the affairs of the new state. Friendly gestures from the government were spurned, and the chasm dividing church and state in Italy was not closed as successors to Pius IX faithfully followed his precedent in this matter. Even so large-minded a pontiff as Leo XIII had not deviated from it to any substantial degree. The attitude of Pius X was quite as intransigent as that of any of his predecessors.

As part of their policy of refusing to recognize the outrageous procedures of 1870, and in order to demonstrate their continuing policy of opposition to the Kingdom of Italy, the popes had over the years established the tradition that heads of Catholic states coming to Rome on official visits to the King of Italy would not be received at the Vatican. The reasoning behind this policy was that a state visit to Rome lent dignity to the upstart Italian kingdom that had usurped the Pope's temporal powers, and in a very real sense served to ratify the kingdom's dispossession of the papacy. All of which may appear to be making much of minutiae, or nourishing grievances best laid to rest; nevertheless, such was the Italian domestic scene in 1904. And, as events were to demonstrate, the question was far from being a trivial one.

The papal policy in regard to receiving Catholic heads of state had never been a factor in French church-state relations before the turn of the century. Since Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance, there had been little likelihood that a French president should desire to visit the Quirinal or be invited to do so. After 1900, however, the Quai d'Orsay, encouraged by the diplomatic success scored in 1894 with the formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance, and optimistic over the prospects of arriving at a *modus vivendi* with Great Britain, began to consider the possibilities of a rapprochement with Italy. Better relations between the two Latin powers could conceivably damage the cohesiveness of the Triple Alliance, even if it resulted in no tangible benefits to France. Consequently, the Quai d'Orsay began to toy with the notion of sending President Loubet to Rome in 1902. Because it was desirable to preserve cordial relations with the papacy, M. de Navenne (chargé d'affaires at the French Embassy) was instructed to determine if Loubet might also be received at the Vatican, thereby avoiding the appearance of snubbing Leo XIII. In reply, de Navenne recalled that twenty years earlier, after the signing of the Triple Alliance, Victor Emmanuel had traveled to Vienna, but Francis Joseph had never returned the visit because of the Pope's policy. De Navenne predicted flatly that Leo XIII, despite his affection for France, would not receive Loubet if he came to

Rome.[1]

Nothing materialized from these speculations, for Loubet did not go to Rome in 1902. The prospects for a presidential trip did not vanish, however. In 1903 the question was raised again by Delcassé, who wondered if an agreement might not be arranged, whereby Loubet could see both King and Pope while in Rome.[2] It is clear that Delcassé ardently wished to arrange a compromise that would permit an improvement in Franco-Italian relations without upsetting the delicate balance of France's relations with the papacy. It was difficult to formulate a policy, however, because the Foreign Office received conflicting reports from Rome about the feasibility of coming to an understanding with the Pope. M. Nisard, who presumably was in a position to know, was quite positive that compromise on terms acceptable to the Pope was entirely out of the question. In a lengthy despatch to Delcassé in late March, the Ambassador noted:

> The Head of the Church will not waive, for the benefit of the President of the Republic, a policy clearly defined and invariably observed. . . . What advantages would we be prepared to offer the Curia in exchange for what we are asking? Would the prospects of an eventual rupture of the bonds uniting Italy with the Germanic Powers, as a consequence of the President's voyage, be sufficient to sway Cardinal Rampolla, and through him the Pope, to this sacrifice?
>
> There remains the pressure to be exercised upon the Pope through the threat of a rupture of relations in case of his refusal. Admitting that it be decided to go to that extreme, would it produce the desired effect upon the Holy See? Assuredly the Pope will always bear in mind the hypothesis that a rupture of the ties joining France and the Vatican would be the greatest setback his policy could encounter. But does it necessarily follow that to avoid this eventuality he is ready to make any sacrifice? It cannot be forgotten that the question of visits is bound up with everything that dominates pontifical politics today, yesterday, and in the future: the question of the independence and sovereignty of the Holy See. It is therefore probable that Leo XIII will remain faithful to his invariable attitude, because to yield to France would be to yield to everyone else

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, V (1901-1902). Letter of de Navenne to Delcassé, Rome, 22 August 1902.

[2] *Ibid.*, VI (1903), Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 17 March 1903.

> and to assure the triumph of the House of Savoy. It would be a sanction for the *fait accompli*. Such are the conclusions that the Italians and the rest of the world would draw.[1]

From M. Barrère, Delcassé received rather a different impression. Barrère reported from Rome that he had discussed the question with "an eminent cardinal, a possible successor to Leo XIII," who maintained that though the issue was difficult, it was by no means insoluble. It was suggested that if the French government undertook some initiative toward easing the tensions troubling its relations with Rome, then doubtless mutually agreeable arrangements might be made. Barrère concluded: "In no case would the Vatican seek to cause a rupture . . . the idea has not even occurred to it; on the contrary, it would have to be reduced to very harsh extremities to allow the President to leave Rome without meeting the Pope."[2] Barrère did not elaborate upon what steps the government might take to achieve the *détente* he thought desirable, but the tenor of his despatch indicated that a general relaxation of official anticlericalism would be in order.

At the time that these despatches were traveling between Rome and Paris, the French government still had not definitely decided upon the desirability or feasibility of a presidential trip to Italy, but the fact that the possibility of such a journey was being considered was not unknown to Vatican authorities. Cardinal Rampolla made it clear that Rome took a very grave view of the consequences attendant upon a presidential visit to Victor Emmanuel. The Secretary of State warned M. Nisard that

> an eventual visit to the Quirinal by the head of a Catholic nation, such as the President of the French Republic, under the well known

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VI (1903). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 30 March 1903.

[2] *Ibid.*, Letter of M. Barrère to Delcassé, Rome, 30 April 1903.

> circumstances of the present time, would be regarded by His Holiness as an offense no less against the rights of the Holy See than against His august person itself, and consequently the Vatican declines all responsibility for the prejudicial consequences such an event might produce.[1]

A short time later Rampolla felt it necessary to elaborate further upon his objections to Loubet's coming to Rome. "France is not bound to the King of Italy by ties of blood or by a political alliance," Rampolla wrote. But, he concluded, France was bound to the Vatican by a bilateral pact, and

> because she is Catholic . . . her President is bound to recognize in the Pope his spiritual chief and the spiritual chief of the people he governs. Consequently, if the President of the Republic, for political advantages . . . chooses to pass over the head of the Pope to obtain such advantages at the expense of an affront to the Head of the Church, he would be acting like the head of a heterodox state.[2]

After the death of Leo XIII in 1903 correspondence between Rome and Paris on this subject ceased, but by that time the Vatican had made its position in regard to state visits very clear.

It is difficult to ascertain Emile Loubet's view of the prospects of a trip to Rome. Because of his limited political role, the President could have very little personal initiative or choice in these proceedings; he was little more than an agent acting on behalf of the cabinet. Combarieu noted in his diary in June 1903 that Loubet was aware of reports from Rome that he would not be received by the Pope. The President, however, still believed at that time in the possibility of compromise with the Vatican, and therefore "would like to put off this trip for as long as possible, hoping that if the government's anticlerical policies are soft-pedaled, negotiations might be arranged."[3] Though the President remained optimistic, Combarieu had largely abandoned hope of maintaining friendly relations with the Vatican by January, 1904. In his journal entry of January 12, he wrote: "In truth, the force of events is leading to a separation. The two illustrious personnages, Pope and President, seem at heart resigned . . . not to meet. Each refuses to assume a responsibility that he seeks to place upon the other."[1]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VI (1903). Letter of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 2 June 1903.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Cardinal Rampolla to Mgr. Lorenzelli, Rome, 28 June 1903.

[3] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 251.

Until the spring of 1904 all accounts of a forthcoming presidential voyage had been categorized by the government as mere speculation. In March, however, all the necessary arrangements for such a trip had been completed and the Council of Ministers decided that Loubet should undertake the trip in late April.[2] Delcassé appeared before the Chamber of Deputies to request the appropriation of an extraordinary credit of 450,000 francs to defray the expenses of the presidential journey. Delcassé expressed his conviction that Loubet's appearance in Rome would do much to promote better relations between France and Italy. Significantly, the Foreign Minister said nothing about the possible repercussions of the visit for France's relations with the Vatican. Surprisingly enough, neither did the handful of opposition deputies who spoke against the proposed trip. Combes did not speak on the question, and the appropriation was granted with a minimum of debate and delay, being approved by a vote of 499-10 on March 25, 1904.[3]

The presidential voyage took place without incident and was accounted a resounding success in every respect save its effect upon France's relations with the papacy. Combes had not accompanied Loubet and Delcassé to Rome, apparently out of deference to the President's express desire,[4] but the

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1. Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, pp. 269-270.
2. Combes, Mon ministère, p. 158.
3. Annales, Chambre, LXIII (25 March 1904), 1179-1181.
4. Combes, Mon ministère, p. 158.

Premier derived a perverse pleasure from the trip all the same. As he put it,

> It will surprise no one that the latter [Loubet] refrained from proposing to the Prime Minister that he accompany him on the trip. . . . But if the President did not have me at his side, he had to resign himself to having me in his ears and before his eyes all the while he was in Rome. . . . My ceaseless and more and more decisive campaign against clericalism must have aroused real enthusiasm in foreign countries, especially in the Latin nations.[1]

Combes received reports that his picture adorned the walls of the Eternal City, and his name was shouted in the streets.[2] These expressions of admiration for his Prime Minister can scarcely have added much pleasure to Loubet's sojourn in Rome.

Emile Loubet left Rome on April 28 without having seen Pius X, and without having made any official public attempt to do so. The Pope, for his part, had refrained from extending any invitation to the President to come to the Vatican. Both the French government and the papacy had maintained the outward appearances of intransigence. It now remained to be seen what consequences would follow. Before Loubet had gone to Rome, Le Siècle, a newspaper not noted for warmth of feeling toward clericalism and the Church, had realistically summarized the dangers inherent in Loubet's projected voyage. According to this paper, the presidential trip must be regarded as posing a challenge to the Vatican since papal policy regarding visiting heads of state was well known. If the Vatican chose to make an issue of Loubet's visit to Victor Emmanuel, then it might provoke consequences leading to a separation of church and state, despite the fact that neither Combes nor Delcassé personally favored abrogation of the Concordat.[3] But it was generally conceded that the next move was up to the Vatican. It was apparent to most observers that the Vatican regarded President Loubet's voyage as an insult and a slight, if not a direct challenge, to papal dignity and prerogative. The notes, official and otherwise, exchanged between the Quai d'Orsay and the Court of Rome, the newspaper articles and editorials appearing in 1904, the warnings issued by Vatican sources as early as 1903, all had made the Pope's position excruciatingly plain. The question posed following Loubet's appearance in Rome concerned what the official reaction of the Vatican would be. Two immediately obvious courses of action lay open: to ignore the presidential voyage and preserve a pained but dignified silence, or to manifest some positive form of disapproval, thereby dramatizing the still considerable power and influence of the Holy See. Given the strained state of relations with France, it was unlikely that the Vatican would feel that it could afford to allow an affront to the Pope to pass without response. But the response must be delicately gauged if the Holy See wished to preserve its relations with France. It was decided that an official diplomatic protest would be delivered to M. Nisard on April 28, the day that President Loubet left Rome for his return to France.[1]

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 158.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Le Siècle, 2 April 1904, p. 1.

The protest remonstrated in general terms against President Loubet's recent trip. The stated purpose of the note was "to maintain before all Christians Our imprescriptible rights."[2] The note was not inflammatory in tone, and no reference was made to a possible recall of the Nuncio from Paris. Delcassé read the note of protest before the Council of Ministers on May 5. The Foreign Minister observed that the document was so formulated as

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Telegram of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 29 April 1904, 7:50 p.m.

2. Quoted in L'Univers (Paris), 11 May 1904, p. 1.

to appear to require no reply, and he recommended that none be made.[1] Combes did not agree with this view: "It seemed out of the question to suggest that the French government submit without resisting the reproof—injurious in its intent, if not in its form—of the Holy See, which was a sort of declaration of its intention to meddle in the direction of our foreign policy." Combes suggested that if there were to be no reply to the note, the government ought to make it clear to the Vatican that it refused to accept the protest. The Premier's view was accepted by the Council of Ministers.[2] Finally, Combes made it plain that if any sort of publicity were given to the papal note, the government would reserve the right to take immediately "any measures that seem commensurate with protecting the dignity of France."[3] This latter stipulation was possibly inspired by a brief notice appearing in La Lanterne on May 4, reporting a rumor to the effect that the Pope had sent copies of the note to all Nuncios accredited to Catholic powers.[4] Delcassé wrote Nisard on May 6, notifying him of the government's formal rejection of the protest.[5]

Meanwhile, rumors and reports circulating in the French press gave indications that the Vatican's protest might well have major repercussions. The most persistent rumor concerned the transmission of the document to other countries. La Lanterne had briefly noted such an eventuality on May 4;

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1. Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 159-160.

2. Ibid., p. 160.

3. Ibid.

4. La Lanterne, 4 May 1904, p. 1.

5. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Letter of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 6 May 1904.

Le Temps followed with a lengthier account two days later. It was reported that copies of the papal protest had been sent to Nuncios around the world as a warning to all chiefs of Catholic states who might plan to visit Rome. Le Temps regarded this maneuver as an example of bad humor, since the papal policy was already well known and scarcely required further dramatization at France's expense.[1] France's rejection of the protest was carried by L'Humanité and by Le Temps on May 7. Both papers indicated that the question now seemed more serious than before, and L'Humanité expressed the view that a major crisis was in the offing.[2] Interestingly enough, no newspaper had yet published the text of the papal note. The document in its entirety was first printed in L'Univers, a Catholic journal, on May 11. The newspaper cited "a Roman source" as its authority for the text of the document.[3]

Le Temps supported the government in its rejection of the protest. Loubet's trip to Rome was described as "absolutely essential" to French interests. Since Pius X would not have received Loubet even if the latter had gone to the Vatican, it was difficult to justify the assertion that the Pope had been wounded or snubbed by the President. France, presently engaged in important and very delicate diplomatic maneuvering, must ultimately base her foreign policy upon some other foundation than Rome's approval or displeasure.[4] L'Humanité went further. Delcassé, whom many anticlericals found too sympathetic toward the Vatican, was blamed for limiting the government's

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1. Le Temps, 6 May 1904, p. 2.
2. L'Humanité (Paris), 7 May 1904, p. 1.
3. L'Univers, 11 May 1904, p. 1.
4. Le Temps, 8 May 1904, p. 1.

action to a simple rejection of the protest. The paper hoped that Combes would take sterner action: "The President of the Council will not wish to leave unpunished this affront to French democracy," it predicted.[1]

After the lapse of a week during which no new developments had occurred, L'Humanité took up the cudgels again. In an article entitled "An Intolerable Situation" Aristide Briand sharply criticized Delcassé for the feebleness of his policy in regard to the Vatican, and attacked Pius X as "the candidate of William II." The Concordat had outlived its utility, Briand wrote. Designed to protect the rights of France, it had become an instrument for attacking the nation's dignity. The French Ambassador to the Quirinal and the French Ambassador to the Vatican were working at cross purposes. Briand did not voice his solution to the difficulties troubling France's relations with Rome, but the conclusions to be drawn were implicit in the tenor of the article.[2]

On May 17, Jean Jaurès exploded a bombshell. Writing in L'Humanité, Jaurès made a sensational disclosure that was to precipitate a rupture of diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican. The Socialist leader had procured a copy of a protest drawn up by Merry del Val and delivered to Catholic heads of state around the world.[3] The subject of this note was President Loubet's recent trip to Rome, termed "so grave an event that the Holy See cannot allow it to pass without calling upon it the most serious attention of the government Your Excellency represents." It was asserted that the French President's visit was the culmination of a plot hatched by the government of Italy, for the purpose of further diminishing the Vatican's rights. Though the Vatican viewed the affront to the Pope as serious enough to warrant recalling the Nuncio from Paris, this drastic step had not been taken because of "grave motives of a special nature."[1]

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[1] L'Humanité, 8 May 1904, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., 14 May 1904, p. 1.

[3] According to Combes, Jaurès was given a copy of the document by the Prince of Monaco. (Combes, Mon ministère, p. 287.)

The existence of this document, until now a subject for speculation and rumor, had become all too apparent, and its value as an anticlerical weapon was not lost upon the radical anticlerical press. Jaurès, having published the note, was the first to capitalize upon it. The document inferred that Pius X had the prerogative of judging and condemning Loubet, but aside from that, Jaurès wrote, it constituted a double and insolent provocation to both France and Italy. "The rupture between France and the Vatican is virtually accomplished by this act," he concluded.[2] Putting the spur to the government, Jaurès warned that "divorce is inevitable between republican democracy and the papacy. We wish that it be accomplished under conditions of liberty and justice." He termed Delcassé's diplomacy "a policy of shadows" and urged immediate action.[3] Georges Clemenceau added his voice to that of Jaurès in the interest of pushing Combes and Delcassé toward a more vigorous policy. "The terms of this note are so serious, so offensive to both France and Italy, that the government will find itself constrained to accept the challenge," Clemenceau wrote.

> By what right does the papacy interfere in our external relations, so intimately bound up with domestic politics? . . . It is important that M. Combes not misinterpret the point: it is a question of

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[1] L'Humanité, 17 May 1904, p. 1.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 18 May 1904, p. 1.

> internal politics that is under scrutiny. . . . Now not only M. Delcassé but also M. Combes will have his hand forced by the publication of a document one or the other of them ought to have foreseen. The policy of folded arms cannot long remain the order of the day. . . . We have been shown the path toward the definitive secularization of the state and of society. We shall not stop halfway.[1]

The anticlerical press was unanimous in arguing that the government's rejection of Merry's note of April 28 was insufficient response to the provocation. Moreover, as Aristide Briand noted, the note to the French government had not contained any reference to the Nuncio or to the thought of recalling him. The fact that this implicit threat of rupture had been inserted into the notes delivered to other powers made matters worse.[2] La Lanterne urged positive action from the cabinet, and warned that "if the government does not act, then republicans will have the right to say that the anticlericalism of M. Combes is all show, and that at the first encounter, the cabinet capitulated to the Pope."[3]

It was Clemenceau who returned to the attack on May 19 and who delivered the most telling argument in favor of immediate action. His remarks are worth quoting at length:

> M. Combes in his office can regulate very wisely the successive acts of his government according to his views and his strategy. However, if he is not ready, when circumstances require it, to throw away maps and compass in order to march straight at the enemy, not only will he turn his back upon passing chance, but he will also deliver us in the midst of battle to disorder, incoherence, and discouragement, preludes to disaster. Let him ponder this. His government has already made one capital error, that of having received the insolent provocation before the very eyes of Europe, of attempting to hide Rome's offense from France herself, and that precisely because republican electors would have been unanimous in demanding a decisive reply. For the head of an anticlerical government in a democracy, there could not be a worse failing, for the electorate cannot determine our policy

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[1] L'Aurore, 18 May 1904, p. 1.

[2] L'Humanité, 19 May 1904, p. 1.

[3] La Lanterne, 18 May 1904, p. 1.

> in regard to the Vatican if someone hides from it the knowledge of measures taken by the head of the Church. I know that there was no evil intent [in Combes' policy]. But I do see there something scarcely less dangerous, the weakness of a heart that cannot steel itself to acts from which there is no retreat. To make war on the monks, to threaten the bishops, without striking elsewhere, is nothing more than a sham undertaking. One does not have the right to enter the battle and then to weaken at the decisive moment. . . . Pius X threatens us with the recall of his Ambassador, and if he fails to make good his threat, it is out of simple consideration for our money. How does M. Combes tolerate the fact that the representative of the French Republic is still genuflecting in the Vatican?[1]

Though political pundits like Clemenceau accused Combes of knowing about the papal protest to the Catholic powers and trying to keep it quiet, it is obvious that verification of the note's existence took the government by surprise. Delcassé reported Jaurès' revelation to M. Nisard in Rome, clarifying the issue in the following telegram:

> The communication of terms used in regard to the President of the Republic—regularly rejected by us—to foreign governments, constitutes an offense aggravated by the phrase, not appearing in the note of April 28, by which the Cardinal Secretary of State excuses himself as it were for not having recalled the Nuncio from Paris. Find out about the existence of this circular note immediately from the Cardinal Secretary of State. If its authenticity is admitted, or if a reply is evaded, I authorize you in the name of the government to leave Rome without delay, leaving the Counsellor of the Embassy as chargé d'affaires.[2]

The instructions contained in this despatch were formulated as a result of a special cabinet session held at the Elysée. Combes took full responsibility (or credit) for the recall of M. Nisard:

> I proposed this recall and I had my colleagues accept it after a rather brief but also rather lively deliberation, which led several cabinet members to envisage the eventual consequences of the action and to manifest their lack of enthusiasm, or to be more exact, their repugnance, for the doctrine of separating church and state. Incidentally, the President of the Republic went so far as to say that he

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[1] L'Aurore, 19 May 1904, p. 1.

[2] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Telegram of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 19 May 1904, 6:30 a.m.

> would resign rather than sign an act of separation. I was not surprised at this declaration, but I did have some apprehensions over its future implications.[1]

In the meantime, M. Nisard was engaging in a series of maneuvers in Rome that were to lead to his recall, but even the simple instructions sent him by Delcassé seemed to cause complications and a muddle quickly ensued. Nisard reported on May 20 that Merry del Val had evaded a direct reply to his enquiries about the circular note of protest. Merry had said that he could not give a verbal answer, but would reply in writing to a written enquiry. Though this clearly constituted an evasion and provided grounds for Nisard's immediate departure from Rome, the Ambassador could not bring himself to take this step, and wrote Delcassé for instructions.[2] The Foreign Minister's reply was emphatic: Nisard was to leave Rome at once, leaving M. de Courcels in charge at the embassy.[3] The following day, Nisard wrote that he would leave Rome that evening. The Ambassador had seen the Cardinal Secretary of State and informed him that the request for a written enquiry was merely an attempt to elude a clear reply, and that "under these conditions, I was invited in the name of my government to depart from Rome on leave . . ."[4] Delcassé immediately wrote Nisard, pointing out that never had there been a question of Nisard's going on leave; he was recalled, which was quite another matter. There must have been an error in transmitting Nisard's instructions. Delcassé himself had just received Mgr. Lorenzelli and had taken the opportunity to inform him that Nisard had not left Rome on leave.[1] Nisard had already left Rome by the time this despatch arrived, but an embassy official who looked into the matter informed Delcassé that there had been no error in the transmission or the deciphering of Nisard's instructions.[2]

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 161.

[2] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Telegram of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 20 May 1904, 4:40 p.m.

[3] Ibid., Telegram of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 20 May 1904, 9:20 p.m.

[4] Ibid., Telegram of Nisard to Delcassé, Rome, 21 May 1904, 5:20 p.m.

The newspapers inevitably got hold of the confusion generated by M. Nisard's departure from Rome. Clemenceau wrote an article appropriately entitled "In the Fog" for L'Aurore, and took the opportunity to point up several areas of conflict and confusion. "M. Nisard left Rome after having pressed Cardinal Mathieu to his breast. 'A bientôt,' said the Ambassador. It is impossible to tell whether M. Nisard represents France to the Pope, or the Pope to France." Clemenceau also made reference to the status of the Republic's relations with Rome: the government claimed that the Ambassador was recalled, while the Vatican insisted that he was on leave. "Are we in the painful extremity of seeing a Jesuitish plot to dupe public opinion and Parliament?" Clemenceau wondered.[3] On May 25 the government officially announced Nisard's recall to France. The Vatican's circular note to the Catholic states was cited as the reason for the decision to recall the Ambassador.[4]

It is difficult to gauge the effect that the departure of the French Ambassador had upon the Vatican. M. Barrère corresponded with Delcassé

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Telegram of Delcassé to Nisard, Paris, 22 May 1904, 7:40 p.m.

2. Ibid., Telegram of M. de Courcels, Chargé d'affaires at the French Embassy to the Vatican to Delcassé, Rome, 23 May 1904, 4:25 p.m.

3. L'Aurore, 24 May 1904, p. 1.

4. Le Matin, 25 May 1904, p. 1.

several times on this subject, sending such reports as he could put together. These accounts indicated generally that Merry del Val was roundly condemned in some ecclesiastical circles for the inopportune manner he had chosen to present the Pope's protest to the Catholic world. There were rumors of Merry's imminent retirement, a step thought necessary if relations with France were to be restored.[1] According to a conversation between Barrère and Cardinal Agliardi, Pius X too had lost some of the good will and warm regard that had inaugurated his reign. Agliardi had opposed the preparation of the papal protest, but had assented with the understanding that the document would be given "an academic character and a moderate form." The final draft of the note had caused him great surprise. Agliardi maintained that Mgr. Lorenzelli had played a major role in causing the present crisis through his failure to keep the Pope informed about the state of things in France. Agliardi and other members of the Sacred College agreed that Merry's retirement promised the sole solution to the crisis, but in light of the Pope's attachment to him, his withdrawal seemed most unlikely. Barrère concluded this lengthy despatch with an interesting evaluation of Pius X and his policies:

> a strange spirit in the successor to Leo XIII preoccupies both his friends and his foes. The memorable events of recent days trouble him not at all; his indifference in this respect borders upon carelessness. "A month from now," he says, "it will be forgotten." He imagines that the abrogation of the Concordat, the separation of church and state, are without danger; that they simply signify the revival of the independent action of the clergy.[2]

Many anticlericals had not found Combes' policies sufficiently decisive; in particular, the continued existence of the French Embassy to the Vatican and Mgr. Lorenzelli's continued presence in Paris were intolerable to them. Clemenceau summed it up nicely when he wrote: "As long as we merely wanted to sup on a nun and dine on a Capuchin, M. Combes willingly undertook to provide the fare. But when it is a question of regularizing definitively and according to republican doctrines relations between church and state, he declares, in order to spare himself the effort, that he hasn't the means."[1] La Lanterne saw evidence of complicity between the Quai d'Orsay and the Vatican for the purpose of reconciling France with the papacy by blaming Merry for all the wrongdoing and errors.[2] The paper also expressed impatience with Lorenzelli's presence in France. It was urged that the Nuncio be sent packing immediately.[3] Not content with criticizing Delcassé and the Nuncio, La Lanterne was at length provoked into needling Combes himself for the laggard policies he had pursued since Nisard's return to Paris. Combes had seemed content to introduce interminable bills to be buried in the Senate, while refusing to undertake decisive actions such as suppressing the ecclesiastical budget and terminating the existence of the embassy to the Pope. In an editorial entitled "To M. Combes," the Premier was severely taken to task in these terms: "Lost in your parliamentary combinations, you have seen only the little side of anticlericalism, the necessity of which keeps you in power, and many republicans are not loath to believe that you have come to find in anticlericalism a good way to stay in power."[4]

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[1] Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VII (1904). Telegram of Barrère to Delcassé, Rome, 25 May 1904, 6:00 p.m.

[2] Ibid., Letter of Barrère to Delcassé, Rome, 31 May 1904.

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1. L'Aurore, 25 May 1904, p. 1.
2. La Lanterne, 25 May 1904, p. 1.
3. Ibid., 26 May 1904, p. 1.
4. Ibid., 27 May 1904, p. 1.

Combes' position could not have been an agreeable one. Doubtless he was not unduly disturbed by the attacks of clericals who accused him of recklessness and haste in the recall of M. Nisard.[1] After two years in power, the forays of clerical writers could be taken for granted and shrugged off with equanimity. On the other hand, biting criticism of the sort inflicted by La Lanterne, and the impatient proddings of anticlerical luminaries such as Clemenceau, Briand, and Jaurès must have produced sensations of a new and unpleasant nature. For a politician like Emile Combes, who had always insisted upon well-nigh unanimous support from his friends and colleagues, the discovery that he was now being outstripped by the more advanced segment of anticlerical opinion must have come as an unwelcome revelation. Politicians of the stripe of Jaurès and Clemenceau, newspapers like L'Humanité, La Lanterne, and Le Rappel, had formed the core of Combes' defenders and supporters for two years. It was impossible for the Premier to ignore their criticisms and their growing manifestations of impatience. And so there emerged gradually in the months after May, 1904 a pattern of events that is strikingly and ironically similar to the pattern established during Waldeck's administration: that of an increasingly radical parliamentary majority pulling along a less enthusiastic and at times unwilling Prime Minister.

Regardless of how Combes and others attempted to portray the events of the summer of 1904, it is evident that the Premier, for all his priest-eating ardor, and to the detriment of his hitherto unblemished anticlerical reputation, held back from taking the ultimate step of broaching the separation question in Parliament and then proceeding to act upon it. His anticlerical supporters found him too hesitant, and with reason. When the Council of Ministers had met on May 18 to deliberate the steps to be taken in regard to L'Humanité's publication of the papal protest, Combes did not propose radical action. To be sure, he took the credit for bringing about the recall of M. Nisard, but this act proved more dramatic than decisive. The embassy to the Vatican still continued to function under the able supervision of M. de Courcels (as Paul de Cassagnac maliciously pointed out a little later).[1] There is evidence that Combes did not seriously consider even the possibility of going further than this gesture. He is reported by an eyewitness to have declared to the cabinet and to the President that

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[1] L'Autorité, 27 May 1904, p. 1; La Libre Parole, 27 May 1904, p. 1.

> he would refuse to denounce the Concordat or to prepare for separation because at the time of its formation, the cabinet had not placed separation in its programme and because the electorate ought first of all to make its wishes known on this grave question in the next general election. Until then, the government would continue to apply the contract.[2]

Combarieu was doubtful if Combes would hold firm in his resolve, and events were to prove the presidential secretary's suspicions well founded.[3]

Emile Combes, like all politicians, was subject to various sorts of pressure in 1904. The most potent influence at work upon the Premier originated with his parliamentary supporters. A reading of the anticlerical press for the year 1904, especially of such papers as L'Humanité and L'Aurore, which served as sounding boards for the opinions of political leaders like Jaurès and Clemenceau, indicate that for some time Combes had been trudging along rather well to the rear of the most advanced anticlerical opinion. A growing awareness of the fact that the Premier had little stomach for pushing matters toward an irrevocable break with Rome had cost him praise and popularity in some extremist quarters. After Nisard was recalled, the Premier had become even more subject to the impatient spurs of radical anticlericals. Abel Combarieu observed that "under the whip of Jaurès and Clemenceau," Combes was being perceptibly goaded into ever wider activities.[1] Because of their persistent prodding, Combes finally agreed to permit a preliminary parliamentary discussion of separation. The issue was raised in the Chamber of Deputies on May 27, for inevitably the confusion and controversy over the papal protest attracted the attention of the politicians in the Palais Bourbon. On May 27, a number of interpellations were directed to Combes and a large part of the session was devoted to replying to them. Interestingly enough, the great majority of these interpellations were formulated by staunch anticlericals and supporters of the Combes government. M. Paul Meunier accused Combes of having kept secret the papal protest to foreign powers, and only _L'Humanité's_ publication of the document had forced the government's hand.[2] Deputies Hubbard and Allard demanded an immediate abrogation of the Concordat.[3] Aristide Briand contended that the crisis of church-state relations had deepened to a point where the breach between France and Rome could never be healed. Consequently, the government must realistically face the prospects of an immediate separation of church and state. The Commission on Separation, of which Briand was reporter, could have a bill of separation prepared for debate by the time Parliament reconvened

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[1] L'Autorité, 30 May 1904, p. 1.

[2] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 282.

[3] Ibid.

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1. Combarieu, _Sept ans à l'Elysée_, p. 290.
2. _Annales, Chambre,_ LXXIII (27 May 1904), 88.
3. _Ibid._, pp. 96, 100.

in October. Briand expressed disappointment that the Combes government had not demonstrated more vigor and initiative in replying to the papal protest, but promised his full support of the government's future anticlerical measures.[1]

In a very real sense, Combes' whole anticlerical philosophy had been questioned by his friends and supporters, and he rose to defend the steps the government had taken--and to explain why it had not taken others--after the publication of the second papal protest. The Premier began by asserting that the government had not acted out of weakness, nor had it been deferential to papal pretensions. The fact that President Loubet had been sent to Rome at all was clear indication that the Combes government had not cravenly paid homage to supposed "imprescriptible prerogatives of the papacy." Ambassador Nisard's recall provided further proof that France had not hesitated to show Pius X that his interference in French internal affairs and foreign relations would not be tolerated. The French reaction had been limited to the recall of the Ambassador for one reason: the existence of the Concordat required that France be represented at Rome. The continued operation of the embassy, under the direction of a chargé d'affaires, did not mean weakness on France's part; rather it evidenced pursuit of a sensible policy based upon the reality of the Concordat's continued functioning. No other policy seemed legally or politically justifiable in the light of events. With these words Combes defended the course of action he had followed since May 10. Next he turned his attention to refuting the notion that separation of church and state ought to be immediately undertaken. The motions--proposing abrogation of the Concordat, suppression of the ecclesiastical budget and the embassy, and others of the like—now before Parliament were simply ill-advised and premature: "These are very delicate questions and cannot be regulated by an order of the day," Combes asserted. But the Premier had read aright the unmistakable signs that his anticlerical friends would not be satisfied with vague words and promises. He therefore agreed that a date be set for a formal debate upon separation of church and state. Combes proposed that the question be deferred until after a vote on the budget for the next fiscal year, which meant that the question would come before Parliament some time in January 1905. Upon the Premier's insistence the postponement was agreed to and an innocuous order of the day, containing no reference to separation or to suppression of the ecclesiastical budget and the embassy, was adopted.[1] The postponement of the debate on separation was in effect a compromise arrangement, worked out with the cooperation of Aristide Briand. The latter was reporter of the parliamentary Commission on Separation of Church and State, formed in June 1903, and which had been quietly working on several projects in the intervening year.[2] The question was thus laid to rest, but not permanently, and not even for as long a period as Combes hoped in May.

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[1] Annales, Chambre, LXXIII (27 May 1904), 107-109.

Anticlerical opinion of Combes' speech and of his parliamentary maneuvering was not favorable. _La Lanterne_, which had become the self-appointed anticlerical conscience of the Republic, thundered that the parliamentary session of May 27 had been a victory for the Pope. The Combes government had wilfully deceived the hopes of republicans by going to the brink of a clean break with Rome and then reneging at the decisive moment.[3]

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1. _Annales_, _Chambre_, LXXIII (27 May 1904), 109-110.
2. Combes, _Mon ministère_, pp. 161, 287.
3. _La Lanterne_, 29 May 1904, p. 1.

This paper was a vociferous proponent of rupturing all relations with the papacy and had consistently advocated closing the embassy to the Vatican. On May 25 the paper had observed: "If the Pope refuses to break with us, let us break twice with him, by giving the Nuncio his letters of recall, and let's chase out the arrogant valet, who like his master has insulted us."[1]

It is necessary to deal with the question of why Combes did not push the extreme anticlericalism agitating his radical friends in late May. The Prime Minister chose to justify his lack of enthusiasm for separation on other than personal grounds, asserting that it was not because of doubts about the wisdom and desirability of an eventual separation of church and state that he held back. In his speech of May 27, he had observed in relation to an eventual definitive settlement of outstanding issues troubling France's dealings with Rome: "The government is as anxious as the most anxious among you, for given the way in which the Concordat is presently being observed—or rather, violated--by representatives of the ecclesiastical authority, it is indispensable that a solution be found."[2] This reference to his theme of clerical attacks upon the Concordat was Combes' way of issuing a scarcely veiled threat to clericals that though he was presently opposed to an immediate rupture with the papacy, he gave no assurances for the future. Already in May, then, Combes was veering toward ranging himself on the side of those favoring separation.

Yet Combes did not feel that this crucial issue was one that ought to be raised hastily. Shortly after the parliamentary session of May 27, he was reported to have said that to have gone one step beyond agreeing to a

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1. La Lanterne, 25 May 1904, p. 1.

2. Annales, Chambre, LXXIII (27 May 1904), 109.

January date for a debate would have wrecked the government.[1] And Briand himself admitted that the Premier was probably right in this regard; the cabinet had never agreed to go to such a length in pursuing its anticlerical policies.[2]

As Combes saw it, the major question of 1904 was not whether the country was ready for separation, nor whether the Premier was ready to undertake it, but rather, whether Parliament, and more important, the cabinet, were prepared for it. Combes believed that much was to be gained from a policy of delay. Despite all the talk by extreme anticlericals, whose fiery calls to action often made it seem as though all the country save the Prime Minister were throbbing with anxiety for rupture with Rome, Combes was not sure that sufficient parliamentary sentiment existed to carry separation through to a resoundingly successful conclusion. He observed later:

> To rush headlong into such a debate would be running the risk of hindering an elevated cause that I intended not merely to serve to my fullest capacity, but to carry through to triumph. This is what I said again and again in private conversations with deputies of different parties, who interrogated me about my intentions in this regard, and it was thanks to the patience that they manifested that every day an increasing number of deputies, formerly uncertain or even hostile, now rallied to the idea of separation.[3]

But even more serious than divisions within Parliament were divisions within the cabinet itself, where the question of abrogating the Concordat had never been raised.[4] Shortly after his speech of May 27, Combes was invited by Briand to appear before the Commission on Separation in order to

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1. Le Siècle, 1 Jun 1904, p. 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Combes, Mon ministère, p. 161.

4. Ibid., p. 162.

express his views about the articles of a separation bill the commission was discussing. Combes declined either to appear before the commission or to give his support to the bill at that time. He pointed out to Briand that as Premier he could not offer his personal support to such a bill without simultaneously speaking for the entire cabinet. This he could not do, because although most of his colleagues were favorable to separation, some were uncertain or hostile. Combes proposed delaying his appearance before Briand's group until he had persuaded the recalcitrant members of the cabinet to drop their objections. He thought that he could effect this transformation of convictions by the time Parliament reconvened in October.[1]

As fate would have it, an unexpected event occurred during the very time when Combes claimed to be attempting to persuade his colleagues and other parliamentarians to his way of thinking, and this fortuitous occurrence played directly into the hands of the anticlericals. It must be recalled that the affairs of Bishop Le Nordez and Bishop Géay were much on Combes' mind in the summer of 1904. The government had requested the Vatican to withdraw its letters threatening to impose sanctions upon the bishops and to disavow its attempts to influence and coerce French prelates to go to Rome. In late July, just at the start of the parliamentary adjournment, came the Vatican's response. Merry del Val denied that Rome's attempt to discipline its clergy constituted a violation of the Concordat, and expressed hope that France would drop its demand for a withdrawal of the comminatory letters. Pius X, as a gesture of conciliation, would extend for one month the period during which Mgr. Géay must come to Rome to justify himself. Merry concluded by stating that such an act of deference served to indicate "the great interest the Vatican attaches to maintaining good relations with the French government; relations founded upon the exact observance of concordatory dispositions."[1]

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 162.

When it met to consider the Vatican's note, the cabinet decided that this reply was unsatisfactory, and the resolution to break all remaining relations with the papacy was taken.[2] Delcassé instructed M. de Courcels to close the embassy and to inform Merry del Val that the French government regarded Mgr. Lorenzelli's mission as terminated.[3] Official news of the rupture of relations was released to the world by Delcassé on August 1.[4]

The intransigence of the Vatican in the Le Nordez-Géay controversies, and the subsequent rupture of diplomatic relations, helped to convince many politicians, including hesitant cabinet members, that separation had indeed at last become inevitable. Much of the hostility or skepticism that Combes had encountered in his conversations with politicians was laid to rest after July 29.[5] The impression that the Premier tried to give in his memoirs was that his work of promoting the cause of separation, which he had been quietly but assiduously pursuing in the manner described at length above, was aided and made easier because of the final rupture of relations. But this is not the whole story, nor is it entirely an accurate account. It is obvious that to the pressure of radical anticlericals was now added the pressure of

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1. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VIII (1904). Letter of de Courcels to Delcassé, Rome, 26 July 1904.

2. Combes, _Mon ministère_, p. 165.

3. Arch. du Min. des Aff. Etr. St.-Siège, VIII (1904). Telegram of Delcassé to de Courcels, Paris, 29 July 1904, 7:00 p.m.

4. _Ibid._, Delcassé circular telegram, Paris, 1 August 1904, 3:45 p.m.

5. Combes, _Mon ministère_, p. 165.

events, and the necessity of breaking off all relations with Rome set in motion a process that Emile Combes could not stop, though it proceeded at a considerably faster pace than he could keep. It is clear that despite his assertions that he was guiding the anticlerical campaign that led up to separation, in September and October Emile Combes was still following, rather than heading, the anticlerical machine.

Because the rupture of relations occurred after Parliament's adjournment, Combes did not have the anticlericals in the Chamber of Deputies badgering him to justify his policies or goading him to further action. Consequently, he was more or less able to proceed at his own pace until Parliament reconvened in October. It was not until early September that the Prime Minister delivered a major address touching upon the prospects for a separation of church and state. By this time, Combes had sounded out his ministerial colleagues and had discovered that they were much more inclined to go along with separation than previously. The Premier decided to announce his personal adherence to separating church and state at Auxerre, a town in his own department. In this speech, he did not formally engage the cabinet to support an abrogation of the Concordat, though he felt that he could safely have done so. At that time, the whole cabinet still had not given formal support to a policy of separation.[1] The Auxerre speech, though it did not indicate that the entire cabinet was prepared to go along with radical demands for destroying the Concordat, was important in Combes' eyes because in it he declared his personal support for an immediate separation. About 4,000 persons, among them the chiefs of various parliamentary factions, heard Combes speak at Auxerre and applauded enthusiastically as the Premier recounted the anticlerical successes his government had scored: the firm application of the Associations Law, the defense of France's prerogatives from papal encroachments, and his successful attack upon clerical education.[1] Then Combes turned to the work yet to be done as a consequence of repeated papal violations of rights reserved to the state by the Concordat. Combes observed:

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[1] Combes, _Mon ministère_, p. 200.

> It can be said that for the last thirty years the ecclesiastical power has exploited the Concordat to its own advantage with unbelievable boldness. It has audaciously, incessantly violated the Concordat, particularly those provisions proclaiming the rights of the civil power. . . . A time has come when continued patience and acquiescence would not merely be obvious weakness, but an avowed abdication of our rights, an unpardonable failing in our duties. . . . The religious power has destroyed the Concordat. For my own part, I do not intend to patch it back together. . . . It is obvious that the only way left open to the two conflicting powers is the same way left open to badly matched spouses: divorce, and preferably divorce by mutual consent.[2]

Combes indicated that a spirit of pacification must prevail when time came to execute the separation; a means must be found of establishing complete freedom of religion under the incontestable sovereignty of the state. His concluding statement was revealing: "We no longer have the same claim to the title of eldest daughter of the Church, which the monarchy established as a point of pride for France, and we are absolutely convinced that our reputation and our ascendancy today depend entirely upon our material power as well as upon our principles of honor, justice, and human solidarity."[3]

It is obvious that despite Combes' claim to have been leading the

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1. Combes, Une campagne laïque, pp. 302-303 (Speech of 4 September 1904, Auxerre). According to Combes, of 16,904 religious teaching establishments, 13,904 had been closed and 500 more were scheduled to be closed in 1905.

2. Ibid., pp. 307, 310, 311.

3. Ibid., p. 314.

anticlerical forces toward separation, he was singularly unprepared to offer them a definitive plan for accomplishing this significant reform. After he became convinced that the cabinet would go along with abrogating the Concordat, Combes decided to meet with Briand and the Commission on Separation. According to his own account, only one meeting was required for Combes to agree with the dispositions being taken by Briand and his colleagues. Combes told Briand, "With the exception of a few points, my intention is to adopt the commission's text, in order to spare it the trouble of having to deliberate on a new project."[1] In October, the cabinet met to decide upon its official position upon the separation question that would be broached in the new parliamentary session. Combes informed Loubet that he had given his support to the Briand Commission's project, in order to spare the President from having to sign a bill prepared by his Prime Minister.[2] Loubet offered no objection to this procedure, but he did not appear particularly impressed with Combes' desire to sugar-coat the pill.[3] No reference was made to Combes' speech at Auxerre, but the Premier recorded that "the President's face, which for some time had revealed an extreme coldness, was even colder at this meeting."[4] However, there were no recriminations at this time, and the cabinet, without discussion or division, agreed to suppress future credits for the embassy to the Vatican, a move understood by all present to presage abrogation of the Concordat.[5]

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[1] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 162.

[2] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 292.

[3] Combes, Mon ministère, p. 239.

[4] Ibid., p. 202.

[5] Ibid.

The way was thus cleared for preparing the final separation of church and state. Events, however, were to dictate that Emile Combes should not carry the project through to completion. At the crucial moment, the Combes government lost the confidence and support of certain important individuals and groups whose backing had been of paramount importance for the past two and one-half years. In his memoirs, Combes related that Clemenceau's support was lost because Combes refused to give preferment to one of the Senator's friends.[1] Clemenceau, the Premier asserted, intrigued with others who had grown weary of Combes' leadership: Millerand, Leygues, and other former ministers.[2] More serious than these alleged conspiracies was the decision taken by the Socialist Party to cease its cooperation with the Délégation des Gauches in the Chamber of Deputies. This maneuver occurred after a party congress in Amsterdam in August condemned the principle of Socialist participation in a bourgeois government. Jean Jaurès announced his adherence to the party line, thereby depriving Combes of the close support and cooperation he had enjoyed from the Jaurès faction.[3] The defection of the Socialists from the Délégation des Gauches (which Combes' enemies called "the bloc") sounded the death knell of the cabinet in Combes' ears. "The Délégation des Gauches . . . was the essential mechanism of my political system," Combes later wrote. "It assured me of the concourse of all the leftist groups whose union was indispensable to me in overcoming the resistance of other groups in realizing the program of reforms . . ."[4] Combes was hopeful that with proper handling, the Socialists, or at least those who followed Jaurès, might yet be persuaded to support the government's policies. However, open warfare between the Gauche Radicale, led by M. Sarrien, and the Socialists wrecked any prospects of future cooperation. Sarrien claimed that Combes had favored the Socialists too much in the past and had failed to preserve a balance among the leftist groups supporting the cabinet.[1] Sarrien's jealousy of Socialist influence and the plums the party had received was to have serious consequences. Though Combes had already announced his intention of supporting the separation bill being elaborated by the Briand Commission, he was forced to abandon this plan. Sarrien and his group felt that to allow Briand virtually to prepare the legal groundwork for separation bestowed too much prestige upon Briand personally and upon Socialism generally. To placate Sarrien and the Gauche Radicale, whose support was now essential since the Socialists' withdrawal, Combes had to agree to prepare a governmental bill on separation to be presented to the commission. Doubtless this procedure would be regarded as an affront by Briand and the commission, but there was no alternative if Combes wished to retain the support of Sarrien and the Gauche Radicale.[2]

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[1] Combes, _Mon ministère_, p. 203.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 225.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 227.

[4] _Ibid._, p. 228.

In preventing one difficulty from materializing, Combes of necessity created another. A governmental project on separation would require President Loubet's signature before it could be introduced in the Chamber of Deputies. Combes had previously professed to wish to avoid imposing this distasteful duty upon Loubet; now he must broach the matter with the President. When Combes appeared at the Elysée in early November with the government bill ready for Loubet's signature, he had gone half expecting a scene. Combes attempted to impress upon Loubet his distress at having to request the presidential signature upon a document of which Loubet disapproved. The President merely replied, "It is merely another mortification to be put up with. So be it. You have made me put up with many others."[1]

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[1] Combes, _Mon ministère_, pp. 231-233.

[2] _Ibid._, pp. 237-238.

The Combes project of separation was presented to the Chamber on November 10, 1904. Hastily prepared, it provided that within one year after the Law of Separation should be promulgated, all state financial aid to every religious grouping in France would cease. Catholics must organize "Associations of Worship" which would be allowed to use property belonging to the Church, and which would rent property belonging to the state. Catholic Associations of Worship would have no function beyond conducting the Catholic religion in France; their directors must be exclusively French. There would be no public religious displays or ceremonies after separation, and places of worship must never be used for political meetings. It was to be understood that clerical interference in politics would not be tolerated under the new regime.[2] Though Briand was put out by the sudden appearance of a governmental bill, he was persuaded to remain as reporter of the Separation Commission.[3] The commission accepted the Combes bill without dissension, perhaps because Combes had largely adopted the main ideas already formulated in the commission's deliberations on its own bill.[4] These events had ruined the little rapport remaining between Combes and Loubet, and had resulted in

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1. Combes, Mon ministère, p. 239.
2. L'année politique, 1904, pp. 541-544.
3. Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 240-241.
4. Ibid., p. 241.

a growing estrangement between the Premier and his supporters. The Socialists had been lost, and Combes no longer felt close to or comfortable with Sarrien and the Gauche Radicale. Even as he introduced his separation project in the Chamber, Combes had presentiments that his term as an effective and useful Prime Minister was over.[1]

The Combes government resigned in January 1905, but its demise was not provoked or hastened by its anticlerical policies. It had been revealed in November 1904 that General André, the Minister of War whom Combes had inherited from Waldeck-Rousseau, had been conducting a systematic enquiry into the lives, deportment, and beliefs of officers in the French Army. André had employed an elaborate spy system in conducting his investigation, the results of which were contained on several thousand filing cards or *fiches*. The fact that the Minister of War had in his possession information concerning the private views and opinions of officers was in itself disturbing enough, but the way in which André's spies had come by their knowledge was more shocking still. André's office had made use of informers provided by the office of the Secretary-general of the Grand-Orient. It was claimed that only those officers who were Freemasons or freethinkers could expect preferment in the military establishment. Others were regarded as dangerous or untrustworthy.[2] Combes disclaimed knowledge of the details of André's system of gathering information (though he was aware of the existence of about 3,000 *fiches*, most of them dating from Waldeck's administration),[3] but when the procedures employed by the War Ministry were publicized by a parliamentary interpellation of General André, Combes had to shoulder the responsibility for André's system. On November 4, the interpellation took place in the Chamber of Deputies, and André's disclosures precipitated a stormy scene reminiscent of 1899. André was struck full in the face by M. Syveton, a nationalist deputy. Combarieu believed that the government would have fallen had not Syveton's action aroused sympathy for André.[1] General André resigned, but the furor he had caused served to undermine further the confidence and support the Combes government had enjoyed from the Left and from some moderate deputies. Combes believed that Waldeck's old colleagues were especially active in fomenting troubles for him.[2]

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[1] Combes, *Mon ministère*, pp. 240-241.

[2] Lt. Robert Nanteuil, *Le dossier de M. Guyot de Villeneuve* (Paris, 1906), pp. 15-19.

[3] Combes, *Mon ministère*, pp. 242-243.

By December, Combes was resolved to submit his resignation to Loubet. The Premier had been considering this line of action ever since August when he had lost the support of the Socialists, and he became more determined upon it as the events in Parliament took their course. He professed concern lest the growing unpopularity of his government endanger the success of the anticlerical program and perhaps thwart the course already set toward separation.[3] Before resigning, Combes chose to have the Chamber of Deputies approve the program he had pursued over the past two and one-half years. This favorable vote was taken on January 18, 1905; the Combes program was approved by a vote of 265-240. The Premier had already notified Loubet of his intentions, saying that he realized that the Chamber was tired of him.[4] Combes blamed parliamentary and personal intrigues, rather than loss of popular support, as the chief cause of his retirement.[1] Combes submitted the resignation of his cabinet to Loubet on January 18. With the letter of resignation came a report that complained of intrigues and cabals that had prevented him from realizing his whole program. Combes was also careful to point out that he had retired only after receiving a parliamentary vote of confidence "that once again consecrated the policy and program of the cabinet."[2] The conclusion to be drawn from this report was that Loubet must designate as Premier a man prepared to follow a policy conforming exactly to the opinion of Parliament and the nation. Loubet was much put out by the wording of this report, but he was indeed constrained to appoint a new Prime Minister who was to carry on the anticlerical program to fulfillment.[3] Maurice Rouvier headed the new government, Aristide Briand continued to work on the separation bill, and less than a year after Combes' retirement, in December 1905, the Law of Separation was enacted.

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[1] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, pp. 292-293.

[2] Combes, Mon ministère, pp. 248-249.

[3] Ibid., p. 241.

[4] Combarieu, Sept ans à l'Elysée, p. 298.

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[1] Combes, _Mon ministère_, p. 241.

[2] Combarieu, _Sept ans à l'Elysée_, p. 298.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 299.

Chapter XII

CONCLUSION

The anticlerical campaign that began shortly after the formation of Waldeck-Rousseau's Republican Defense Cabinet in June 1899 terminated with the resignation of the Combes government in January 1905. During that period of five and one-half years, France had witnessed the working of a dramatic and revolutionary change in her religious establishment, passing from a concordatory regime to the realization of the old Radical program of "free churches in a free state." When Waldeck took office in 1899, abrogation of the Concordat and separation of church and state had had no place in his governmental programme. Whem Emile Combes left office in 1905, the concordatory pact that had regulated church-state relations for over a century lay in ruins and the definitive separation of the civil from the ecclesiastical power was virtually accomplished. To the casual observer it might appear that at some point in the brief flow of time separating June, 1899 from January, 1905, a radical change of policy must have been effected. At some given moment there must have occurred a dramatic and decisive philosophical revolution that precipitated the trend toward separation. But investigation of the available evidence produces no clue as to when that decisive moment occurred. It is impossible to determine when the decision was made to pursue the anticlericalism inaugurated by René Waldeck-Rousseau to the conclusion reached in 1905 by Emile Combes. Perhaps, then, it is not amiss to suggest that the decisive moment never occurred, that the decision (conscious or unconscious) to push the anticlerical campaign to its ultimate conclusion was never made. If the anticlericalism that preoccupied the French nation in the period under consideration and which culminated in the breach of relations between France and the Vatican can indeed be viewed as a sort of revolutionary development in French politics, then perhaps it can be contended that, like most revolutionary movements, the anticlerical campaign grew and progressed without benefit of master plan or timetable and obeyed no rationale save that of its own making. Waldeck-Rousseau did not foresee to what lengths anticlericalism might extend in 1899. By 1902 he was becoming increasingly aware that the anticlerical current was running more swiftly than he was prepared to go. But Emile Combes, who has been traditionally viewed as the proponent of a much more virulent brand of anticlericalism than Waldeck, did not, in 1902, foresee the position in which he found himself in the closing days of 1904. And here is the element which gives these years, 1899-1905, and these two political administrations their peculiar similarity and their unique cohesion. The anticlerical campaign, supposedly directed and shaped by these two politicians, provides the current of continuity between their administrations. And it is clear that instead of directing the events of the anticlerical movement, both Waldeck and Combes were themselves caught up in the current and sometimes swept along almost haphazardly in the ever-accelerating pace of change.

Anticlericalism was destined to emerge as the central issue in French politics from 1899 to 1905. It is doubtful, however, that Waldeck-Rousseau could have anticipated this unexpected turn of events in June, 1899. Waldeck had been designated for the premiership because it was thought that he alone possessed the requisite antecedents and the necessary contacts to liquidate the Dreyfus Affair and restore calm to a Republic daily verging upon internal disintegration. He accepted the responsibilities that other political leaders shunned, and his program, defined in 1899, embodied no more specific measures than to defend the institutions of the Republic. It was not until after he had taken office that Waldeck discovered that in the eyes of his radical and socialist supporters, the easiest road to defending the Republic led to an attack upon clerical influence in French politics and society. For the sake of retaining power and saving the Third Republic, Waldeck was obliged to make concessions to the parties that made power possible. In view of the fragmented nature of French politics and of the dominant parties in the Chamber of Deputies at the turn of the century, it is not surprising that anticlericalism should have become the basic policy of Waldeck's government. The groups—Socialists, Radicals, Radical-Socialists and Progressists—that gave Waldeck his majority were too much in disagreement on fundamental issues such as social legislation and economic reform ever to agree upon a positive legislative program to be pushed through Parliament. The chasm dividing Socialist from Progressist conceptions of the state's role in providing social security or enacting labor legislation would have doomed the prospects for cooperation—and consequently would have doomed Waldeck's Republican Defense experiment too—if these subjects were made part of a governmental program. Ironically, the chasm separating the Socialists from Radicals and Radical-Socialists was nearly as broad and unbridgeable as that separating Socialists from Progressists—or Radicals from Progressists, for that matter. In a word, then, the practical considerations of forming and holding together a governmental coalition precluded the possibility of Waldeck's formulating and executing a long-overdue program of social and economic reforms. Confronted with the formidable array of questions and issues that caused division and confusion, Waldeck and the politicians of necessity were constrained to seek for what united them. They found it in a policy of anticlericalism, though, to be sure, there was little genuine unanimity among the majority parties about what constituted a realistic anticlerical program, or how far such a program ought to be pursued. But generally speaking, the politicians who threw their support behind Waldeck-Rousseau in the crisis of 1899 might have felt, paraphrasing Gambetta in 1870, that anticlericalism was the issue that least divided them. It had served respectable republicans frequently enough in the past; there was no reason to doubt that it would prove useful again. And so anticlericalism (subject to individual definition and limitation, to be sure) became the cement that was chiefly responsible for holding Waldeck's variegated majority together for three years. Waldeck-Rousseau bowed to political exigency: an anticlerical campaign was the price to be paid for power in 1899. In a very real sense, the Prime Minister was captive to the will of his parliamentary supporters on this vital issue, and events were to demonstrate that Waldeck was not always free to choose the direction or the pace that the anticlerical movement would take.

All of this is not to say that Waldeck was swept along, willy-nilly, by the forces he unleashed in 1899. Waldeck-Rousseau was himself an anticlerical politician, and in many respects he was in basic agreement with the aims and policies of his anticlerical allies. A reading of his speeches while he held the premiership will serve to demonstrate his suspicion of clerical influence in both education and politics. But many strains and degrees of anticlericalism were visible in 1899, ranging from the intolerant intransigence of Alexandre Zévaès who would have suppressed the Catholic religious orders outright (and the Church too, for that matter) to the enlightened moderation of Waldeck himself. As Premier, Waldeck-Rousseau's task was to strike a balance between these two extreme philosophies, to reconcile the classic nineteenth century liberal tradition that he personally embodied with the Jacobin radicalism personified by Zévaès. This objective was to prove most difficult to achieve. Indeed, before Waldeck left office, he had found it to be unattainable.

Waldeck-Rousseau did indeed stand in the mainstream of the nineteenth-century liberal philosophy of politics and government. His early work in the field of labor legislation had demonstrated his interest in social reform. Waldeck was an advocate of progress and reform as these terms were defined in the liberal lexicon of 1899. Progress must proceed at a natural, unhurried pace, always keeping up with, but never outstripping the need and the demand for change. Reform must never advance to the point where it became indistinguishable from revolution. Both progress and reform must be responsive to the natural laws that governed the evolution of societies. To be valid, the forces of change must always correspond to and grow organically out of the elements of continuity within French society. Tradition and history were the determinants of how much change French society could and would tolerate at any given moment; therefore a reform program must ultimately be grounded in an appreciation of France's history and traditions. Waldeck added to these general liberal tenets his own personal legalistic views and predilections, his conviction that an anticlerical program, to be constructive and enduring, must ultimately rest upon a firmly established legal and constitutional foundation rather than upon prejudice and passing whim. Although he was forced to compromise some of his tenets during his premiership, Waldeck held firm in his insistence that a legalistic approach was the only feasible one for his brand of anticlericalism. He was ready to abandon all theories, doctrines, and slogans dear to the hearts of many of his anticlerical colleagues in order to practice what must surely be termed the politics of the possible.

The Associations Law of 1901, universally accounted the most significant legislation enacted during Waldeck's administration, may be regarded as the standard by which Waldeck's success in implementing his anticlerical philosophy must be measured. The evidence suggests that he was not entirely successful in imposing his moderate views upon his extremist allies. The Associations Law as finally enacted represented in certain essential respects the views of its parliamentary commission rather than those of the moderate Premier. In the key provision of authorization procedures for the religious orders, the final draft of the bill reflected the conceptions of Georges Trouillot, not of Waldeck-Rousseau. There can be little doubt that Trouillot's insistence upon legislative, rather than executive, authorization mirrored Radical prejudice against the unauthorized orders. Waldeck perfectly understood this and worked to persuade the commission to accept his views, but his efforts were doomed to failure. In the end Waldeck was obliged to accept legislative authorization as a cardinal principle of the new law.

Yet it is obvious that Waldeck did not suffer bitter disappointment or disillusionment over the Associations Law as it was finally promulgated. Despite the concessions he had made to his extremist allies, the law emerged as a measure firmly grounded in French legal and administrative tradition. Its provisions could scarcely be regarded as innovations. Rather the law embodied concepts that republicans had long regarded as desirable and necessary in the proper conduct of church-state relations. Waldeck, with his peculiar awareness of what was politically possible, knew that the real test of the law's efficacy and scope would ultimately be found not in its provisions but in its enforcement. Applied with moderation and a measure of patience and tolerance, the Associations Law could yet be the supervisory legislation that Waldeck had envisioned in 1899.

The election of 1902 upset both Waldeck's timetable and his program of moderate reform. The parliamentary election returned to the Palais Bourbon a radical coalition whose anticlerical sentiments did not accord well with those of the Premier. If elections may be regarded as indicative of the state of the public temper on significant questions, then it must be concluded that not merely the politicians, but the electorate as well, favored a vigorous anticlerical program. Certainly the newly-elected deputies regarded the election returns as a sort of mandate for anticlerical action. Waldeck must have drawn a similar conclusion, for he chose to retire rather than to lead the new majority. To be sure, Waldeck's health was an important factor influencing his decision to abandon power, and he could also validly claim that the crisis that had been his cabinet's *raison d'être* was solved in 1902. But the real motivation for Waldeck's withdrawal was political. He had been subjected to ever-increasing radical anticlerical pressures since 1899, and he had been obliged to proceed down the anticlerical path faster and further than he would have liked. The program set in motion in 1899 had gained momentum with the passage of time, and by 1902 the anticlerical machine was moving faster than Waldeck wished to go. Unwilling and unable to keep pace, he abandoned it to Emile Combes.

While it is true that Combes' anticlericalism differed in several respects from that practiced by Waldeck-Rousseau, these differences are chiefly a matter of intensity and degree. Combes' hostility to the Catholic religious orders was not confined to the unauthorized congregations, but extended to the legally constituted orders as well. Indeed, Combes evidenced a fundamental suspicion of monasticism that colored his entire approach to the religious issue in French politics. His pronouncements, as well as his actions, indicated all too clearly that he found it impossible to view objectively the congregations and their activities. This is particularly true of Combes' attitude toward monastic education. While Waldeck had regarded the provisions of Article 14 of the Associations Law as more than adequate, Combes found them insufficient to protect laic education. Hence his excursion into the field of school legislation that resulted in the Law of 7 July 1904.

It cannot, however, be maintained that Combes despised religion. Nor was he anti-concordatory. The Premier's views on the necessity of religious and moral concepts were well expressed in his unpopular "spiritualist declaration of faith" of 1903. But like Waldeck-Rousseau, and indeed like all except the most extreme anticlericals, Combes made a distinction between religion and clericalism. Combes viewed religion as a vital part of human existence, useful in providing psychological assurance and security to the individual psyche, and necessary for the shaping of collective ideals of order, morality, and justice. But to Combes--and to Waldeck--religion was to be confined to church buildings and private homes. When religion entered politics and clergymen attempted to influence or control elections, the Army, the bureaucracy, and the educational system, then the thin dividing line separating religion (essentially a private, individual affair) from clericalism (frequently defined as the political power of organized religion) was crossed and anticlerical passions were aroused. Such an anticlerical philosophy was essentially Voltairean; both Waldeck and Combes would have perfectly understood Voltaire's abhorrence of "priestcraft."

It is obvious that neither Waldeck-Rousseau nor Combes was able to implement his anticlerical philosophy in a vacuum. Both men were political leaders who were obliged to consider and work within a framework of the policies and desires of their parliamentary majorities. Neither was free to choose a theoretically perfect line of anticlerical action and pursue it, at his own pace and in accordance with his own conceptions, to its logical conclusion. The fundamental necessity of keeping the support of their political allies precluded the execution of what they might have regarded as the ideal program of religious reform. But this is only half the story, for the policies of Waldeck and Combes were also partially determined by the reaction of the Roman Catholic Church to the new French anticlericalism manifested after 1899. With the passage of time, the Church's attitude toward the policies of the French government became more intransigent and suspicious. Combes found the Vatican more difficult to deal with than had Waldeck simply because, by 1902, the Church had become less inclined to acquiesce in the government's repeated assaults upon ecclesiastical privilege. As the Church's resistance to anticlerical activities sharpened, Combes and the anticlericals were spurred on to sterner actions, which in turn inspired the Church to take counter-measures. In this way a vicious circle of action and reaction was established, and each crisis in church-state relations prepared the way for subsequent difficulties.

The Roman Catholic Church in France faced a dual crisis as the twentieth century opened. The resurgent anticlericalism manifested in 1899 was, in reality, the less serious aspect of this crisis. France enjoyed an anticlerical tradition going back to the time of Philip the Fair, and laws and decrees designed to circumscribe the Church's prerogatives and pretensions had long been a fact of French political life. The Church had weathered all such previous crises and had emerged without serious damage to its position and prestige. Doubtless Catholic leaders in France and in Rome would have viewed this latest anticlerical storm with more equanimity were it not for the fact that after 1899, the Church itself seemed less secure and less able to withstand the assaults of the forces of secularism. In truth, Catholicism and organized religion generally had been on the defensive in Europe throughout the nineteenth century. The rationalist-materialist philosophy that sprang from the eighteenth century Enlightenment, reinforced by the discoveries and achievements of nineteenth century science, had produced among the educated elite of western Europe an attitude of profound skepticism and doubt in regard to traditional religious doctrines. Whatever the masses may have felt, the dominant political and social groups were infected with this spirit of skepticism, and their outlook was distinctly secular. The rapid growth of Socialism and Freemasonry further contributed to the secularization of nineteenth century European society, and nowhere was this more true than in France.

The Church evidenced alarm over these disturbing ideological trends, but its first reactions were negative ones of rejection and denunciation. The publication of the Syllabus of Errors (which French anticlericals delighted in playing up as typical of Catholic medievalism) and the condemnation of Socialism, Freethought, Freemasonry and other secular movements as inherently wicked provide good examples of the Church's essential negativism and its paucity of ideas in the conflict with these new "godless" currents. For a long time the Church in France doggedly resisted the notion that a modification of some of its social and economic doctrines might be in order. Social reform movements within the Catholic Church were severely criticized or suppressed, and even the wholly innocuous "Christian Democratic" movement was viewed with great suspicion. The French Church was just beginning to adjust to the exigencies of existing and functioning in modern industrial society at the turn of the century. This adjustment had not been completed when the anticlerical campaign began, and the Church was forced to respond to this renewed secular attack upon its position while it was torn by internal quarrels and dissension. French Catholicism was consequently unable to counter the anticlerical attack in any really effective manner. Moreover, preoccupied with its internal difficulties, combatting the ideas inherent in the secular philosophy of the century, and now forced to ward off the assaults of anticlerical politicians in the French parliament, it is scarcely surprising that the Church's reaction to this multitude of problems should sometimes have reflected frustration, bitterness, despair, and occasionally near-hysteria. By the time that Emile Combes assumed power in 1902, many leading Catholics in France and in the Vatican had come to regard the French Church as the victim of an active persecution. Obviously, the time was fast approaching when patience and tolerance, seemingly completely ineffective in protecting the Church's rights, would have to be abandoned in favor of sterner and more efficacious methods of resistance.

It is interesting to note that the Church's determination to resist anticlericalism more energetically coincided exactly with the intensification of the anticlerical campaign in France. The election of 1902, returning a much greater number of anticlerical deputies to the Chamber of Deputies, could scarcely be considered to constitute a mandate for abrogating the Concordat or separating church and state, since Waldeck had never espoused these policies as part of his political program. Indeed, the question of separation was raised only infrequently and then in the vaguest way in the electoral campaign. But the success of radical anticlericals in the election could be interpreted as a sign of public approval of the anticlerical program that had produced the Associations Law, and it was in just this light that the politicians of the new majority chose to view their recent success. Hence the accelerated pace of the anticlerical movement after 1902.

It has been noted that Emile Combes was not anti-concordatory when he took office. But Combes was more determinedly anticlerical than Waldeck-Rousseau; he was prepared to define the prerogatives of the Church less broadly, and he was determined to keep the Church strictly within its proper preserve. In conducting diplomatic relations with the Vatican, Combes tended toward a dogmatic and uncompromising definition of the state's rights as guaranteed by the Concordat. Here there was fertile ground for conflict, for both church and state held long-established and contradictory views of how the Concordat must be interpreted. The fundamental issue here was simple, but apparently it defied resolution, for the French state and the Roman Catholic Church each regarded the Concordat as a guarantee of its prerogatives against the other's encroachments. When questions and difficulties arose between the two powers, solution proved well-nigh impossible since each viewed the Concordat as an instrument of its own convenience. Designed as a contractual arrangement whereby friendly relations between church and state could be maintained, the Concordat was a workable device only so long as both parties to it were willing to exercise patience and toleration to effect compromise. After 1902, patience and toleration were commodities in short supply in both Paris and Rome, and eventually the French government and the Vatican concluded that the concordatory pact had become an increasingly burdensome inconvenience that might best be put aside. Church and state, subject to the demands of existing and maintaining their independence in the modern world, came to see themselves as mismatched partners in a loveless marriage. Despite its well-known views regarding divorce, even the Roman Catholic Church was willing to admit by 1904 that grounds for separation might be found.

Diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican, reflecting the political and philosophical realities already described, worsened after 1899.

Waldeck-Rousseau, despite his conviction that the Concordat was useful in guaranteeing the state against clerical encreachments, witnessed the steady deterioration of the concordatory pact binding together church and state during his administration. Under Combes, the process of deterioration was accelerated until the final rupture of relations occurred. But it does not seem that Combes deliberately set out to destroy the Concordat of 1801. Rather, it was a whole series of relatively minor irritations, such as the "nobis" controversy, that set the stage for rupture. Then came the culminating crisis of Loubet's voyage to Rome, occurring at the same time that the Géay-Le Nordez business was straining relations between France and the Vatican. In less troubled times, these issues, though admittedly vexing, would not have caused a rupture of diplomatic relations. The whole history of French church-state relations in the nineteenth century had been fraught with difficulties, disputes, dissensions and crises. Yet somehow the differences had always been patched up, apparent harmony had been restored, and the civil and ecclesiastical powers had been reconciled. But in 1904 the quarrel was not to be resolved. Too much had happened too quickly; tension was piled upon tension, misunderstanding upon misunderstanding, crisis upon crisis, until it proved impossible to resolve any one issue before another arose. By 1904, after five years of worsening relations, neither the French government nor the Vatican was certain that it was worth the effort and trouble to resolve their differences. Pope Pius X was known to regard the Concordat, as it was being observed in 1904, as an inconvenience. It was easy for certain ecclesiastical authorities to regard the Concordat as a means whereby the government of France interfered in purely religious affairs, and through which anticlerical politicians like Emile Combes could tyrannize both the French hierarchy and the Church's religious orders. And Combes as well as other anticlerical leaders had become accustomed to regarding the Concordat as a lever used by the Church to expand its influence in areas beyond its proper domain. Little wonder then that when the crisis of 1904 reached major proportions, so little effort was made to liquidate it. Compromise was possible in 1904: the Pope could have been more accommodating in his policy regarding Loubet's presence in Rome, and assuredly the famous papal protest to France and to the other Catholic powers represented pique rather than sensible policy. Similarly, Combes and the French government could have admitted that the Vatican had the right to examine the conduct of its bishops and even to terminate their ecclesiastical functions if they were found wanting. But by 1904, the reserves of patience and compromise were exhausted in Paris and in Rome, and matters were allowed to take their course.

Between the viewpoints of French anticlericals and the Vatican there was a fundamental cleavage that would have been difficult to reconcile even in a period less subject to storm and stress than the turn of the century. Church and state took contrary views of the nature and function of the religious orders, of the Concordat, of ecclesiastical personnel, and these conflicting attitudes were bound to produce tension. But above all else there existed a divergence of philosophy as to the nature and purpose of religion itself, and this philosophical divergence proved unsusceptible to rational discussion and compromise. The Church could not admit that any areas of human existence lay outside the boundaries of religion as the Church defined that term. Politics, education, social and economic organization, all these spheres of human activity were subject to direction and guidance from the Church. This philosophy was bound to run headlong into a resurgent French anticlericalism which regarded the Church as an essentially medieval institution representing the forces of supernatural obscurantism in a modern world. On the strictly diplomatic and political level, there could be little meaningful dialogue between church and state so long as both powers were fanatically jealous of their rights and prerogatives, or so long as one was determined to win prestige by triumphing over the other. It is clear, then, that the anticlerical campaign of 1899-1905 transcended the personalities who had inaugurated it and who fancied that they were directing it. Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes were caught up in a quarrel far larger than a question of internal politics; they were merely transitory figures in a conflict between the forces of religion and secularism, of universalism and particularism which was as old as civilized society itself. The fact that the anticlerical campaign began with an effort by the government to regulate the monastic orders and ended with a rupture of relations and ultimately separation is indicative of the deep-seated and expansive force of the issue.

This does not mean that Waldeck and Combes were insignificant figures in the anticlerical campaign. They were important in that as individuals they were able to stamp the movement with their own personalities, even though they were unable to change the movement's direction. They were not mere pawns, for each exercised options and pursued policies that did influence the color, tone, and external appearance of French anticlericalism, and each influenced the speed of the movement toward separation. Under Waldeck-Rousseau, anticlericalism had proceeded at a fairly moderate pace and was imbued with a legalistic and philosophical content that it was destined to lose under his successor. But the direction never varied, and Combes, instead of radically departing from the policies pursued by Waldeck, merely exaggerated and intensified them. After all, both men claimed to be acting in defense of republican institutions. The difference between the Associations Law and

Combes' separation bill is a difference of degree and intensity, not one of policy.

Combes found it necessary to pursue sterner measures against the Church for two reasons. First, the situation had changed since Waldeck abandoned power, and Waldeck's moderate approach did not seem suited to dealing with a Church determined to resist anticlerical pressures and indeed, obviously willing to seize the offensive. Waldeck dealt with Leo XIII; Combes dealt with Pius X. Waldeck opened the campaign and resigned before it waxed bitter; Combes concluded the campaign and was forced to deal with difficulties and problems all of which were not of his own making. In a sense, Waldeck's policies helped to bring Combes to power, and to a certain degree left Combes little choice except to intensify the anticlerical campaign. In a word, Waldeck-Rousseau, who began the anticlerical movement and who abandoned power, required a Combes to carry the movement to completion. The second reason why Combes' policies seemed more intransigently hostile to the Church is to be found in the nature of his parliamentary majority, which was more homogeneously radical than Waldeck's had been. Clemenceau, Jaurès, Briand, and others would not be satisfied with half-measures, and they constantly urged Combes forward. This is especially apparent after the diplomatic crisis of 1904, which provided anticlericals with an excuse to agitate for immediate rupture of relations and separation of church and state. Combes, with his peculiar conception of his role in relation to his majority, was easily pushed ahead. And Combes was pushed into breaking relations with the Vatican, just as he was pushed into broaching the separation question in Parliament. Despite his assertion that he was preparing his colleagues for acceptance of a policy of separation of church and state in the fall of 1904, it is obvious that Combes himself had not come completely around to the idea.

The haste with which he drew up and introduced his separation bill is indicative of his lack of preparedness in this regard.

Combes' resignation in 1905 did not slow the pace of the anticlerical campaign any more than had Waldeck's resignation in 1902. Indeed, the process of separation was completed during the premiership of Maurice Rouvier, who, of all Combes' colleagues, had been least enthusiastic about the cabinet's anticlerical policies. By the time that Combes resigned, it made little difference who was Premier. Events and policies of Waldeck's and Combes' ministries had led irrevocably to the supreme crisis in church-state relations, and separation was the natural result. In view of the determination of the anticlerical majority of Parliament to pursue the conflict with the Church, and because the public appeared apathetic and indifferent to the Church's fate, separation of church and state was a foregone conclusion by January, 1905. The passage of the law of separation was the anticlimactic termination to the campaign that had begun with Waldeck-Rousseau and for all purposes ended with Combes' resignation in 1905.

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